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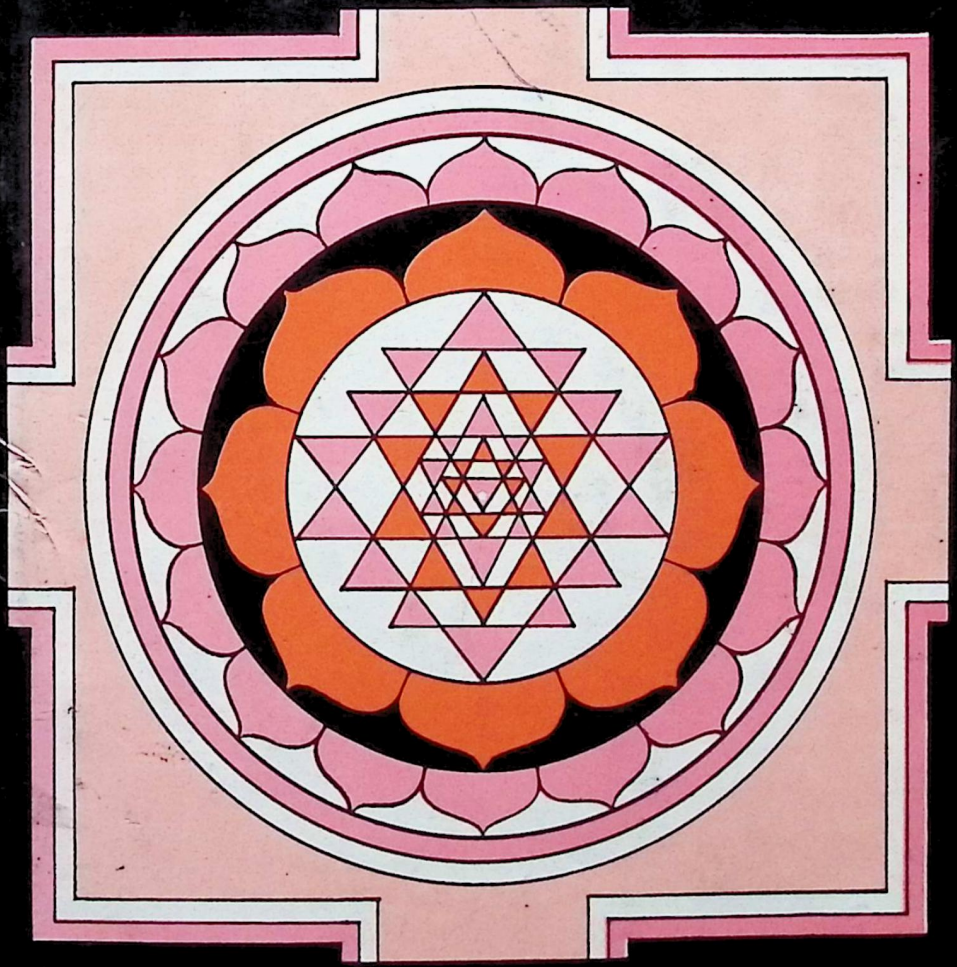
ŚANKARA'S
SAUNDARYALAHARĪ



COMMENTARY BY

NATARAJA GURU

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SAUNDARYA LAHARI

The Upsurging Billow of Beauty

of

SANKARACARYA

English Translation and Commentary

by

NATARAJA GURU

स्कैन/Scanned

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FOREWORD

The *Saundarya Lahari* of Sankara had been one of the most controversial hymns in the spiritual literature of India. It is traditionally taken for granted that it belongs to the Tantra School of Indian spirituality. Then, why did Sankara, the uncompromising Advaitin (non-dualist) happen to compose such a hymn? So some scholars came to the conclusion that it was only wrongly ascribed to Sankara and that it was an anonymous work. But the present commentator is fully convinced that it is a work of Sankara. It is Advaita Vedanta itself that is presented in it in a pictorial language.

The ultimate aim of Advaita Vedanta is realising the Absolute Truth. This Truth is not inert but dynamic. It is not chaotic, but systematic, with a structural coherence of its own. The language which expresses this Truth also should imbibe the same structural coherence. In other words, the wordy language turns out to be more structural than verbal. A lack of understanding of this secret language has always vitiated a proper evaluation of all scriptures, especially of India. The commentator claims that an intuitive understanding of the structural language, which he calls 'proto-language,' serves as a master key to open the hidden nature of the teachings of the Upanishads and similar scriptures. He uses the same key to open the mystery in this highly poetical and puzzling composition of Sankara.

The Devi or the Goddess stands here only for a visual aspect of the Bliss aimed at by the Advaitin. The beauty of the Goddess is nothing but an objective re-presentation of the Absolute Joy *(paramānanda)* of the Advaitin. Here Tantra serves as a canvass on which a unique picture of Advaita is colorfully painted. It was his own Guru's (Narayana Guru) philosophy that enabled Nataraja Guru to write this commentary.

With great pleasure we present this new commentary with a new outlook which is based more on an inlook.

Narayana Gurukula
Varkala
29-11-1988

Muni Narayana Prasad

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PRELIMINARIES

In the autumn of the year 1968 I was preparing for a long voyage round the world. As a first step towards this adventurous project, I had booked a passage to Singapore by the British steamer *S. S. Rajula*. This date remains a memorable landmark in my mind because I had by that time finished all the series of major items of a dedicated life-work, projected by me, having bearing on the teaching of my teacher Narayana Guru, to which I had devoted more than four decades already.

I thought I had no more ambition in that same direction and I found myself sitting in front of a bookshelf of the library that was just being started at the Gurukula Island Home, bordering on the sea in the Cannanore District of Kerala, on the west coast of India. Two volumes of the works of a Malayalam poet called Kumāran Āśān attracted my attention, almost as if by the promptings of some vague principle of chance. I glanced at the two volumes listlessly and without purpose for some time. Before long my attention seemed to linger browsingly over the pages at the end of one of the volumes which happened to be the translation of *Saundarya Laharī* into Malayalam. It was attributed to Sankaracarya, and from the introductory remarks of Kumāran Āśān I found that the date of his translation coincided with the time when he had returned from his training in Calcutta to become the first disciple and successor to Narayana Guru himself. At that time they were living together as Guru and the most favored *śiṣya* (disciple) in a riverside ashram at a place called Aruvippuram, about fifteen miles south of Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala.

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The initial scrutiny of the contents of the translation, each verse of which was printed side by side with the original Sanskrit of Sankara, intrigued me and stimulated my curiosity to such an extent that I began to become more and more seriously engrossed and involved in its study. In spite of not being a Sanskrit scholar of any standing whatsoever, I could discover slight discrepancies here and there between the intentions of the original author and the understanding of the translator. It seemed to me that he was evidently engaged in an almost impossible task, as a result of which all his efforts seemed to be getting repeatedly frustrated or compromised, often with meanings miscarried. This was sufficiently evidenced by the fact that even the barest of a sequential, consistent or commonsense meaning did not result, in spite of the tremendous efforts that seemed to have been lavished on the subject matter. Neither the content, context, purpose nor the person kept in mind as the proper student for these verses could even be roughly guessed.

The more I read these verses and tried to make at least some bare meaning out of them, the more enigmatic each verse seemed to become to my eyes. Strangely, too, my understanding seemed to progress inversely to the increased effort that I tried wholeheartedly to apply to this strange text. When I also remembered in these circumstances that Kumāran Āśān might have undertaken this impossible task at the instance of Narayana Guru himself, which belief was gaining ground with me every time I read the work, my enigmatic interest in this work became all the more heightened.

It seemed to stare at me challengingly, as if to question my critical understanding of a text from a philosopher like Sankara, whose other writings were already somewhat familiar to me. Furthermore, the short introduction by the author of the Malayalam translation, given to justify his understanding, referred to a group of religious people in Kerala, the "Kerala Kauḷins" as he calls them, for whose benefit, according to him, the great philosopher Sankara undertook this apparently onerous task. My self-respect, not to say pride, in considering myself as a person sufficiently capable of understanding in the ordinary course a philosophical text, became stung, as it were, to the quick. And this is how I became personally involved in the

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work which now remains, even after three and a half years, a major challenge to my commonsense or to that degree of average intelligence with which a man of my generation could be expected normally to credit himself.

Even at the moment of writing this (8th January 1972) the enigmatic nature of this work of great absorbing interest still stares me in the face. And it is with certain apologies to many worthy scholars anterior to me and with some hesitations that I enter now on this task of presenting to the modern world the one hundred verses of the *Saundarya Laharī*.

THE ORIGINAL TEXT AND ITS COMMENTATORS

The first forty one verses have to be distinguished, evidently according to the author himself, as the *Ānanda Laharī*, within the totality meant to be entitled more generally the *Saundarya Laharī*. In Sanskrit, *laharī* means "intoxication," or "overwhelming subjective or objective experience of an item of intelligence or of beauty upsurging in the mind of man." The word *saundarya* refers to aesthetic value appreciation. Such an appreciation of beauty must necessarily belong to the context of the Absolute, if the name of Sankara, the great Advaitic commentator, is to be associated at all with this work, however indirectly it may be, on which point we shall presently have more to say. *Ānanda* (delight) and *saundarya* (beauty) are the two possible perspectives of the Absolute value appreciation. When the Absolute value is subjectively appreciated, it is *ānanda*, and when it is objectively appreciated it is *saundarya*.

This work has puzzled pandits and professors alike through the centuries, such as Lakshmīdhara, Kaivalyāśrama and Kāmeśwara Soori of India, and Sir John Woodroffe and Norman Brown in the West, and continues to do so to the present day. It cannot be said, however, that the interest in it has ever flagged since it saw the light of day. On the contrary, it has spread far and wide as evidenced by the various editions of different dates and regions, some of them containing elaborate Persian, Mogul and Rajput paintings, and the increasing number of modern editions, mainly nurtured and nourished by a great revival of interest in that strange form of Indian spirituality

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known as *Tantra*. There is every indication at present that such an interest is still on the increase. Any light, however feeble, that I might be able to throw on such a subject will not, therefore, be out of place.

MY INVOLVEMENT AND CONFRONTATIONS

Between the date of my first getting involved in this interesting text and the present date, I have travelled as much by inner exploration as perhaps to the extent that my wanderings were widely distributed. The intensity of my involvement with this text became more and more absorbing to me.

My first plan was to go around the world by ship. The first lap of my journey was accomplished according to this and I found myself travelling in Southeast Asia, giving lectures on the *Saundarya Laharī* in out of the way places, both in Singapore and various parts of Malaysia. During this period, when I found myself moving from place to place, I did not relax even one day from the uniform and sustained pressure which I applied to the study of the text. Each morning exactly between half-past five and seven o'clock I kept up the habit of sitting with interested listeners, with cups of black coffee and biscuits, trying to delve deeper into the meanings of each verse. I have done so for three and a half years and in the meanwhile I have had to change the course of my world tour. Instead of crossing the Indian Ocean and trying to go towards Honolulu, I came back to India and adopted a revised itinerary by which I could include Moscow, Ghent, Luxembourg, Iceland, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Honolulu, Fiji and Sydney, and be back in India through Malaysia once again, thus spending nearly a year in all my wanderings.

Wherever I had a fairly long stop-over my coffee classes continued and what was even more strange, I could notice that my lessons were evidently of greater attraction to others than to myself. Crowds gathered round me even at the unearthly hour of 5 a. m. and listened to me with remarkable avidity of interest. I could not solve many of the problems that seemed to crop up one after another as the studies continued. I began to differ from almost every book that I came across. The whole subject

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bristled with endless controversial questions and there were moments of despair in which I felt that I was hopelessly involved in some vain task. Some of the questions that came to the surface could be initially and summarily stated as follows:

1. How could Sankara, who is known to be an Advaita philosopher, be credited with the authorship of this text which evidently is of the form belonging to the context of *tantra śāstra?*
2. Why should he have written these verses after his great commentaries, which are by themselves sufficiently monumental for supporting his fame as a Vedantic philosopher?
3. If Sankara gave primacy to wisdom, as is well known, how is it that he seems to have come down to the vulgar or popular level of a worshiper of the beauty of a goddess?
4. The *śrī cakra*, which figures in the text very prominently, seems to be the hallmark by which *tantra* texts are recognizable. What has this geometrical design to do with Advaita Vedanta, which believes only in the purest form of reason?
5. What is the place of eroticism in the context of the austere *sannyāsa* (renunciation) which Sankara stood for so uncompromisingly?
6. Was Sankara interested in *yōga śāstra* (the science of Yoga) also?
7. If not, why does he take the trouble of describing the various details of *cakras* (synergic centers) as seen in the verses of this text?
8. If non-duality is the teaching of Sankara, how is it that he postulates Siva and Śakti as two distinct factors, principles or entities?
9. Is Sankara a religious man at all?
10. How far are the verses compatible with the doctrines developed in his other works?
11. Did his followers give any importance to this work so as to adopt its teaching in any way in their lives as inmates of various ashrams in which they practised their spiritual disciplines?
12. Why does he employ a Puranic and mythological language here?

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CONVENTIONAL TRADITIONAL APPROACH

Because of the above mentioned and various other miscellaneous difficulties, even highly painstaking and correctly critical scholars like Professor W. Norman Brown of Harvard University have doubted even the authorship of these verses. He has gone into the reasons for doing so in very great detail in Volume 43 of the Harvard Oriental Series, and takes care to indicate in the title page of the work, in all academic cautiousness, that the *Saundarya Laharī* is only "traditionally ascribed to Sankaracarya." If we turn to another great authority on Tantra literature, Sir John Woodroffe, the points are not clarified any better. Even a strict word-by-word translation of this work is not so far available, not to speak of a satisfactory versification. Every translation or commentary that I have examined so far, whether in Malayalam, English or in original Sanskrit, has not failed to reveal here or there some appalling state of ignorance in respect of the main intent and purpose of these verses. Except for borrowing rather lightheartedly the *śrī cakra*, which is found in Verse 11 of this work, described in minute geometrical detail, the whole work seems to be otherwise treated with scant and stepmotherly respect, both by the Tantric pandits and professors alike. When I allude to pandits and professors at one and the same time, I am not unconscious of the fact that there are present in Bengal and in South India, especially in Kerala, many who claim to be authorities on Tantra generally, not excluding the *Saundarya Laharī* in particular. I have had occasion to consult quite a few of these authorities, and I can assert with a certain pleasure that they have tried their best to clarify their respective positions in a conventional and traditional manner proper to panditry and pedantry in India. I must at least mention three or four names, like those of Pandit S. Subraḥmaṇya Śāstri, and T. R. Śrīnīvāsa Ayyengar of the Theosophical Society, Kandiyoor Mahadeva Śāstri, E. P. Subraḥmaṇya Śāstri, besides Lakshmidhara, Kaivalyāśrama and Kāmeśwara Soori.

The greater part of Sir John Woodroffe's prolific volumes themselves is based directly or indirectly on what some pandits gave him to understand. It would not be wrong to say that they are based on hearsay, and therefore lack that direct appeal or apodictic certitude necessary to make us treat them with the

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seriousness which the subject deserves. The interest of the present writer is not the same as that of a pandit or professor. Even the question of Sankara's authorship of the work would take at least as much trouble to prove as to disprove. I therefore do not wish to enter into any polemical dispute with anybody, and would content myself with taking a position by which I could say that all the great scholars who have devoted their energies in clarifying this text, though they are right only as far as they go, do deserve our gratitude.

My own personal interest in this subject is based on two considerations only. Firstly, it is a unique work in which, for the first time, Sankara is seen to adopt a non-verbal proto-linguistic approach to philosophy, as when Marshal Mcluhan would say, "the medium is the message." Secondly, I believe that most of the controversies referred to above could be seen to arise from the fact that the text is usually looked upon as if it were a statically given doctrinal statement, instead of being considered as the dialectical revaluation of some anterior position prevailing at the time the author wrote it. The history of religion, as Professor Mircae Eliade of Princeton University has succeeded in proving in his monumental work on the subject *(Patterns of Comparative Religion)*, is a series of dialectical revaluations of the anterior positions in terms of posterior doctrines. Viewed in the light of such a dialectical revaluation, it is not difficult, at least for me, to see that here Sankara adopts a non-verbal linguistic medium to restate his message of Advaita Vedanta, for which he has always stood, here as well as in his great commentaries.

When these two features are fully understood by the modern reader, it will be seen that most of the controversial problems that have puzzled both pandits and professors melt away altogether. The authorship of Sankara could then be easily proved by a certain type of logic acceptable to Buddhism and Vedanta alike, which is called "the argument by impossibility of being otherwise," known as *anupalabdhi*. This kind of logic belongs to the order of axiomatic thinking, and therefore still is understood even by phenomenological philosophers like Edmund Husserl, only with a certain degree of mistrust. No wonder, therefore, that the world of modern thought is involved

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in a characteristic puzzlement belonging to the same general intellectual and cultural malaise, the growing evidence of which is beginning to be recognizable wherever we turn, more especially the world where modern youths express dissatisfaction because of a general gap that they feel existing between themselves and their elders.

This brings us to the next most important consideration that has made me all the more interested in this strange and almost impossible text that I have been trying to understand with all earnestness. There is a new generation of young people, variously called "beatles," "beatniks," "hippies," "flower people" or "drop-outs." In Amsterdam they are sometimes called "diggers" or "provoes." They are unconventional members of a new generation generally with long hair and free ideas about sex, variously influenced by Eastern religions. They believe in miracles and the supernatural powers. Inner space is more important to them than outer space. Mind-expanding drugs are everyday luring them deeper into themselves. Such drugs are said to have a "psychedelic" effect. Yoga and discipleship to a guru are taken for granted by them. Besides Yoga, they are also interested in the secrets of what is called *tantra*. Most of them are genuine seekers for a new way of life, although some of them are seen to be freaks or misfits. Whatever explanation of such a widespread social disadoption might be, it is clear that the movement requires sympathetic understanding and guidance. What they call "institutional life" is their common enemy, and coming into clash with it produces various forms of bad blood, repression or discontent which is at present becoming a problem to all concerned, most especially to themselves. A revision and rearrangement of basic values in life seems to be what they are asking for. Discoveries in science have disrupted the conventional standards in ethics, aesthetics, economics and even in education. Human echology itself has to be reconsidered and revised. The *Saundarya Laharī*, as I soon discovered, lent itself readily to be the basic ground on which human values could be rediscovered, rearranged, revalued and restated more normally and normatively. It is this discovery that dawned on me more clearly each day as I taught in my travels, that made this work all the more dear to me.

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Side by side with this it also dawned on me with equal force that this mainly non-verbally conceived text was just the one that suited the most modern means of man's communication, which is none other than what is coming to be known as "expanded cinema." The magnetic video tape and the advances in computer science, with all the numerous contributions by young and intrepid spirits who are at present engaged in this process which we have called "expanded cinema," have been so spectacular in their development that now it is possible to say that this mass medium would inaugurate what is beginning to be known as a "Faleocybernetic Age," expected to revolutionize the whole individual and collective life of man within a few years.

Man can examine the workings of his own mind, not to say the self, through the intermediary of this wonderful new medium where line, light, colorful vision and audition could help in the process of the marriage of sheer entertainment with the highest form of so called spiritual education. The availability of such a medium could be said to be just round the corner now. The only snag in this matter is that we need a new kind of literature that could be most advantageously fed into the machine when it becomes so. The answer to this kind of demand for a new kind of literature is already found in the *Saundarya Laharī*. This is the second discovery that came to me by chance. The possible appeal of *Saundarya Laharī*, more especially to the drop-out generation, became immediately evident to me. My ambition, therefore, was not primarily to write a new and more learned book on this work, but rather to avail myself of the wonderful possibilities of computerized chromatic magnetic tape for putting across to the new generation the valuable contents of this rare book, where the message and the medium already co-exist without any contradiction between them.

The highest purpose of life, which it was the privilege hitherto of the religious bodies to be able to cater to the public by way of spiritual nourishment, thus comes into the hands of every true educator. What is more, "education" and "entertainment" become interchangeable terms. The success of *Saundarya Laharī* could be expected to open the way to many other possibilities of the same kind. What is called "Self-realization"

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can be made possible, as it were, by a strange irony of fate through startling advances in the world of mechanistic technology itself. Evil shall thus be cured in and through itself by its own cause.

What is called "salvation" results from the cancellation of the non-Self by the Self. Beauty is a visible value in which line, light and color can cooperate to reveal man's true nature to himself. When thus revealed, that final cancellation of counterparts can take place which is capable of removing the last impediment to what we might soberly call "unitive understanding." This is none other than emancipation, or final Freedom with a capital "F". This is the promise that the wisdom of the Upanishads has always held out as the highest hope of man. There is both inner beauty as well as beauty "out there," as it were. The former is that of the yogi and the latter of the speculative philosopher. Both are capable of effecting cancellation of counterparts between the Self and the non-Self resulting in that *samādhi* or *satory* which marks the term and goal of intelligent manhood.

Having stated now the nature of my main interest, let me take one by one the questions that I have raised above and answer them as shortly as I can manage, without getting lost in many unnecessary bypaths.

1. Sankara's great commentaries are primarily metalinguistic while this work is protolinguistic. *Tantra* is only a structural, protolinguistic, non-verbal approach to Indian spirituality at its best, when taken as a whole. We have to think of *mantra*, *yantra* and *tantra* at once as presupposing one another, if we are to enter into a sympathetic and intuitive understanding of the dynamism that *tantra* essentially represents. This dynamism is none other than the mutual participation of *yantra* on the one side and *mantra* on the other. Thus, *tantra* is the "know-how" or *savoir faire* by which *yantra* and *mantra* could interact mutually and produce what we call "the fully real experience of unitive understanding," by a double correction. *Yantra* is associated with a wheel or machine, while *mantra* stands for uttered syllables or sounds. Each *mantra* involves a *devata* or presiding deity that is specially invoked for attaining the efficient result of what is sought. The term *devata* should be distinguished from *deva* (literally, "shining one"), which refers to a god

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or demi-urge. All the *devas* of the Hindu pantheon can be given their correct positions as monomarks in the context of the *yantra*, which is essentially a geometrical figure called the *śrī cakra*. Letters of the Sanskrit alphabet could also be used in place of monomarks to indicate structural aspects of the Absolute within the context of erotic mysticism, where beauty is the most prominent prevailing value.

In the erotic context of *tantra* there are four functional monomarks commonly used which are: the goad and the noose, referring to the spatial dynamism applicable to an elephant, together with the sugarcane bow and five flower-tipped arrows which indicate the limits of the horizontal world of erotic pleasure. Many of the *tantra* texts quoted or alluded to in the writings of Sir John Woodroffe make use of these monomarks and protolinguistic devices profusely, and to such a point of intricacy that the modern reader could easily get lost in their ramifications and complicated implications. For a clear statement we have to go to the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, which perhaps owes its inspiration to Buddhists as well as proto-Aryan Tantric sources. One sees very clearly from this particular *tantra* how the color of the dark monsoon cloud which hangs over the whole west coast of India, from Ujjain to Kanyākumāri, has a place in the context of *tantra*. There is a temple situated on this coast, half way between Gujarat and the Cape, which could be considered to be among the most ancient of epicenters from which this kind of spirituality could be imagined to have spread its influence far and wide, through the Mahāyāna Buddhism of Central and North India, reaching Tibet and finally nourishing the roots of the Śakti cult of present-day Bengal.

Tantra is a discipline which combines the secrets of Yoga side by side with other esoteric teachings. To the lower strata of society, the five *tattvas* proper to its practice—*matsya* (fish), *māṁsa* (meat), *madya* (liquor), *maithuna* (copulation) and *mudra* (gesture)—are to be considered both natural and normal. When this lower form of *tantra* was subjected to revaluation and restatement in the light of Veda and Vedanta, it gave rise to further subdivisions and graded stratifications, such as the *Pūrva Kaula, Uttara Kaula, Samayin* and fully Vedantic versions

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9. To the ninth question raised above, an unequivocal answer is to be found in the first and the last verses of the series. It is not difficult to see that Sankara's Advaita transcends all ideas of holiness or ritualistic merits altogether. He seems clearly to wash his hands of any such derogatory blemish. The *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* contains other similar unmistakable indications in the very beginning, which tend to show that the sacred and holy religious values are all repugnant and altogether outside the scope of the uncompromising spirit of Advaita that he has always represented.

10. Sankara's other works, such as his great *bhāṣyas* (commentaries), are conceived on the basis of demolishing polemically a series of *pūrvapakṣins* (sceptics) taken in a graded and methodic order, in favor of a posteriorily finalized position called *siddhānta*. A careful scrutiny of each of the verses here will reveal that the same finalized doctrine is enshrined and clearly presented in almost every one of them, though clothed in a realistically non-verbal and visualizable form based on the value of beauty that could be experienced by man, whether he is a learned philosopher or not. Just to give one example, we could say that the second verse corresponds to the second *sūtra* of the *Brahmasūtras*, where creation, preservation and resolution form the subject matter, as phenomenal aspects born out of the same Absolute. Examples could be multiplied indefinitely.

11. It is well known that almost all the existing ashramas or *maṭhs* claiming allegiance to the teaching of Sankaracarya, such as that of Sringeri or Conjivaram, still speak in terms of worshipping a Wisdom Goddess, such as found in the Śārada Pīṭh. The tradition started by Sankara is tacitly or overtly adhered to by his followers, although the critical understanding in respect of such worship still remains questionable with most of them.

12. Letters of the Greek alphabet are now being advantageously used in the scientific language. The large quantity of Puranic literature found in Hinduism affords a veritable never-expended mine from which an intelligent philosopher like Sankara could derive monomarks and divinities which could serve the same purpose as the Greek letters in the language of mathematics. Thus, he merely uses the available linguistic

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elements from mythology instead of deriving from mathematics as modern scientists would do. From the Upanishads through Kalidasa's poems, such as the *Śyāmaḷa Daṇḍakam* and his various larger poems like the *Kumārasaṁbhava*, there is to be discerned a definite *lingua mystica* using its own cliches and ideograms, through the centuries down to our own time. After Kālidāsa, Sankara used it most effectively, and it was given to Narayana Guru to be the continuator of the same tradition in modern times.

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chivalry of the days gone by. Adam prefers to keep the forbidden fruit in his hand, and naturally begins to treat the earth as a planet on which he must pass freely. Linguistic or racial frontiers together with dinner jackets and wine glasses, are being left behind in favor of more individualistic patterns of dress or group conduct. Parisian fashions do not impress youth any more, and mind-expanding drugs are beginning to replace those other poisons like champagne that induce merely a feeling of lazy comfort. Public standards are floundering because of this accentuation of inner space, which is holding out new interests to allure the imagination of adolescents.

INNER SPACE AND STRUCTURALISM

LSD and allied drugs, which have what they call a mind-expanding effect, have opened up a world that could be called "pagan," as opposed to prophetic. Sensuousness is no sin to Bacchus, while to a Jeremiah, prostitutes and idolatry, and all the existential values belonging to animism and hylozoism are highly repugnant. The golden calf had to be replaced by the tablet of commandments that Moses and Abraham held up before their chosen followers. The water of the Ganges is sacred to the Siva worshippers of India, and this is the reason that they are spat upon as idolators and infidels, fit to be trampled upon by the elephants that the emperor Aurangzebe used to crush the *kafirs* in the name of the *Koran*. As between the *logos* of the Platonic world of the intelligibles and the *nous* of the pre-Socratic Eleatics, two rival philosophies emerge into view in modern times, trying to determine the superiority of existence or essence. Psychedelics reveal a new vision of the negative aspect of consciousness where what is called the subconscious, and all its contents, become magnified and revealed to inner experience.

There are thus at present two rival minds to deal with: one that is interested primarily in percepts, and the other interested primarily in concepts. Both of these have to be accommodated together in an integrated picture of Absolute Consciousness. A lopsided vision can spell nuisable situations. It is this discovery of inner space that is upsetting and disrupting the total scheme of values of the individualistic "drop-outs" of the present day.

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Values do not all hang together with reference to the same point any more, and the double or multiple standards thus emerging must necessarily confuse people in the domains of ethics, aesthetics and economics, not to mention those of education and religion or spirituality.

Values, both positive and negative, have to be fitted into a fourfold structure, the limbs of which could be summarily indicated in advance as representing the conceptual, the perceptual, the actual and the virtual. This fourfold structure has been known to poets in the West since the time of Milton, and in India since the time of Kāḷidāsa. The *lingua mystica*, of whatever part of the world it may be, seems to have had this mathematical secret hiding within its semantic or semiotic structuralism—sometimes referred to under the term "semantic polyvalence." The Upaniṣads contain many passages that reveal unequivocally this fourfold structure, mentioned so directly in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* when it states *ayam ātmā catuṣpād*, (this Self is four-limbed). The *schematismos* of Kant and structuralism as understood by post-Einsteinian scientists like Eddington, have brought this notion once again to the forefront, and it is offered as a kind of challenge for the modern man to accept or reject. Bergson, while remaining essentially an instrumentalist, is also most certainly a structuralist, as would become evident to any one making a careful scrutiny of the following paragraphs:

> But it is a far cry from such examples of equilibrium, arrived at mechanically and always transitory, like that of the scales held by the justice of yore, to a justice such as ours, the justice of the 'rights of man,' which no longer evokes ideas of relativity and proportion, but, on the contrary, of the incommensurable and the absolute.[1]
>
> Across the time and space which we had always known to be separate and, for that very reason, structureless, we shall see, as through a transparency, an articulated space-time structure. The mathematical notation of these articulations, carried out upon the virtual and brought to its highest level of generality, will give us an unexpected grip

1. Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* Doubleday, 1954, p. 74.

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on the real. We shall have a powerful means of investigation at hand, a principle of research, which, we can predict, will not henceforth be renounced by the mind of man, even if experiment should impose a new form upon the theory of relativity.[2]

The beginning 41 verses of the *Saundarya-Laharī*, are distinguishable as such by the scrutinization of the nature of its content, as pertaining to the world of inner yoga. The *maṇḍalas* the *cakras*, the *yantras*, *mantras* and *tantras*, as representing stable psychic states or experiences of the yogi, figure here to the exclusion of beauty as seen objectively outside. Global perspectives of objective beauty are presented in the latter section of the *Saundarya Laharī*, this name being more directly applicable to Verses 42—100 inclusive. As against this second part of the work, we have the first part of 41 verses which is distinguished by the name *Ānanda-Laharī*, *ānanda* (bliss) being a factor experienced from within, rather than from any outer vision. The title of the total work of hundred verses, justified in spite of this inner division, because that Absolute Value called Beauty, which has here the character of being upsurging or overwhelming in its wholesale appeal to the spirit of man, who wants to give tangible content to the notion of the Absolute, which would otherwise be empty without it, is still that unique value-content, whether subjective or objective, which remains the common subject matter or the object matter of this entire work as conceived by Sankara.

Sankara is well known in the context of *Advaita-Vedanta* by his great *bhāṣyas* (commentaries) on the three canonical texts of *Vedanta:* the *Upaniṣads* the *Braḥma Sūtras* and the *Bhagavad Gīta*. Although some scholars still doubt the authorship of the present sequence of verses and tend to attribute it to some others than Sankara, anyone familiar with the doctrinal delicasies and particularities of the Advaita that Sankara has always stood for, cannot for one moment doubt the hallmark that always distinguishes his philosophy unequivocally. The internal evidence available from almost every verse in this text, as well as the other sister work called *Śivānanda Laharī*, attributed to the same

2. Henri Bergson, *Duration and Simultaneity*, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1965, p. 150.

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Sankara, can, in our opinion at least, leave no doubt about Sankara's own authorship of these two exceedingly interesting and intelligent works. Moreover, Sankara is unmistakably the correct continuator of the *Vedic* or *Upaniṣadic* tradition that has come down to us through the works of Kālidāsa to present day. There is an unmistakable family resemblance here which when viewed in its proper vertical hierarchical perspective existing between the idioms, ideograms, imagery and other peculiarities of a mystical language. One can recognize this masterpiece as representing the best of the heritage of the ancient wisdom of India preserved through the ages, and of which Sankara is, truly speaking, perhaps, one of the more modern continuators.

SANKARA AS A DIALECTICAL REVALUATOR

Sankara is a great dialectical revaluator of all aspects of ancient Indian wisdom. Nothing of Sanskritic cultural importance has been lost sight of by him, including those of semantic, logistic or merely ritualistic *(tāntric)* importance. The authorship of Sankara of these hundred verses, at least, need not be doubted if only for the additional and final reason that we cannot think of any other poet-philosopher or critic attaining unmistakably to the high quality of this work and its sister work *Śivānanda Laharī*. The history of religion is nothing other than the history of a dialectical revaluation of prior positions in terms of posterior doctrines. These two positions could be treated as complementary to each other.

In the Biblical context, this same transition from the old to the new, as from the Mosaic law to the law of Jesus, is invariably marked with the words, "You have heard it said—but verily verilly I say unto you." It is not unreasonable to think that Sankara here takes up what was, till his time, known as esoterics, under the titles of *tantra*, *yantra* and *mantra*, especially as understood in the Kaula and the Samaya traditions, both of Bengal and of South India, and subjects them to his own critical and dialectical revaluation, thus presenting to us the restatement of those "esoteric" doctrines in a fully "exoteric" form, in keeping, above all, with his own avowed position as an Advaita Vedantin. This view must suffice for us here to show that all those who hitherto treated of *Saundarya Laharī* as some kind of text belonging to the

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Śākteya Mother worship cult, would thus be capable of a great inconsistency which they do not themselves explain, thinking that an avowed Advaita Vedantin could ever write a text which does not support his own philosophy. It is strange that even Sir John Woodroffe, who treats of this *Saundarya Lahari*, tends to belong to this category. Professor Norman Brown of Harward has the same misgivings as revealed in the very subtitle of his work where the authorship is dubiously stated as "attributed to Sankara".

Modern man is interested both in post-Einsteinian physics as well as in the world that properly belongs to the discipline of Yoga. Zen Buddhism opens up a world in which meditations and contemplative experiences from within the self have an important place. The *Upaniṣads* and *Vedanta* too, are based on inner as well as outer experiences proper to the contemplative. When we think of inner experiences, we are in reality referring to the mystical experiences of a yogi within himself.

THE NATURE OF THE TEXT

The *Saundarya Lahari* consists of one hundred verses and thus forms a sequence in Sanskrit poetry written in a heavy and dignified metrical form. The syntax and the inflections of Sanskrit are especially suited to the use of highly figurative language, and there are often many layers of more and more profound suggestions as one layer of meaning gives place to another implied below or above it, in ascending or descending semiotic series. We are here in the domain where meanings have their own meanings hidden behind each of them, and the mind sinks backward or progresses forward, upward or downward, within the world of poetic imagination and expression. A sort of meditation and a free fancy are presupposed in compositions of this kind, heavy-laden with suggestibility or auto-suggestibility. There is always a subjectivity, a selectivity and a structuralism that is implied.

FURTHER IMPLICATIONS OF STRUCTURAL LANGUAGE

With reference to this work, it is necessary to clarify the implications of what we call structural analysis. Poetry has the

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primary function of being pleasing or beautiful. Literary critics in the West tend to condemn metaphysical or moralistic poetry as inferior to pure poetry where its enjoyability is its only desirable quality. In the world of Sanskrit literature, however, mysticism and the wisdom that goes with it have never been divorced from the function of poetic art. Aesthetics, ethics, and even economics can legitimately be made to blend together into a pleasing confection that can console or satisfy the love of bliss or joy that good poetry can give—without the compartmentalization of such branches into separate disciplines of literature. Moralist maxims such as found in "Aesop's Fables" or in Alexander Pope's writings have been condemned by critics in the West as being didactic in character and thus detracting from the pure function of poetry as such. We do not look for morals or precepts in poetry any more; much less do we expect, according to western norms of literary criticism, to learn metaphysical truths from poems that must necessarily suffer from didactic tendencies which can never be reconciled with the proper function of poetry which is mainly lyrical or just pleasing. Metaphysical poetry in the West tends to be artificial or forced. The Upaniṣadic tradition has, however, quite a different history. It has always had the serious purpose of revealing the Truth through its analogies and figures of speech. The one Absolute Value that wise people have always been interested in explaining has been for the Upaniṣadic *ṛiṣis*, the one single purpose of their innocent, transparent and detached way of high thinking exhibited through their simple lives. The degree of certitude that they possessed about this Value content of the Absolute, touched a high-water mark in their pure contemplative literature. They had no private axes to grind. Thus, Wisdom that referred to all significant life interests taken as a whole entered into the varied texture of these mystical and mathematically precise writings. Poetry and science were treated unitively here, as perhaps nowhere else in the world's literature, with a few exceptions perhaps as attempted in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or Goethe's *Faust*.

The Upaniṣadic tradition has been compared to the Himalayas, as the high source of the three great rivers of India, the Indus, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. Like the Nile for the

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Egyptians, the snowy peak of Gaurīśankara and the waters of the Ganges have lent their precious idioms, ideograms, and even analogies and figures of speech that have perennially nourished Sanskrit literature. Without the Himalayas and the figurative language in which the Siva family is represented as living on Mount Kailāsa, Kāḷidāsa's poetry would be deprived of much of its grandeur and richness. Siva is the positive principle of which the Himalayas is the negative counterpart. Parvati is sitting on his lap and the twin children represent between them the striking ambivalence of personal types. The white bull, Nandi, the good and faithful servant and vehicle to the principle that Siva represents, reclines nearby. This family can be seen by any imaginative or intuitive person to be a replica of the grand scene of the Himalayas as revised and raised to the dignity of divinity. When an absolutist touch is added to this implied quaternian structure of a Siva family, with the bull representing the foothills of the central mass, the peak dominating the total content of the Absolute as structurally recognizable, we come to have a close and correct perspective by which we may examine this century of verses.

Each verse leaps into meaning only when the underlying structural features are revealed and brought into view, otherwise the hundred verses remain as they have remained through the thousand years or more of their history, a mere challenge to vain pedantry or punditry. In other words, structuralism is the key that can make this work an open book, a scientifically valid work,with a fresh appeal to all advanced thinking modern men of the East or the West. It will be our task within the scope of the work itself to introduce the reader, as occasion permits, to further implications and intricacies of this structural approach, which perhaps is the one feature on which the value and success of this work would have to rest.

Theology permits man to say that he is created in the image of God. This is only a polite way of stating the same truth that, "The Kingdom of God is within you," or "the Word was with God and the Word was God." The bolder Vedantic tradition, however, asserts the same verity when it says, "Thou art that," or "I am Brahman." A subtle equation is implied here between the relativistic perspective of the content of Brahman and its

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more conceptual or Absolutist aspect of the pure notion itself, so that the word "Absolute" could have a tangible content. Such a content cannot be other than some high value because without value it cannot be significant or purposeful in terms of human life. When Keats says, "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever," we recognize a similar Platonic thought repeated on the English soil after the European Renaissance. To treat of Absolute Beauty as the content of the Absolute is fully normal to Vedantic or Advaitic thought, and what is existent *(sat)*, and subsistent, *(cit)*, must both be covered each in its turn by *ānanda* (bliss or value factor), which in turn could easily be equated to the high value of Absolute Beauty. Thus, we see unmistakably the sequence of the reasoning justifying the title of the *Saundarya Laḥarī*. It becomes not only justified but lifted above all forms of lower ritualistic or Tantric contexts to the pure and exalted philosophical domain of a fully Advaitic text, in keeping with the dignity of a scientific philosopher of the status of Sankara. The pure and the practical, the noumenal and the phenomenal, the Absolute and the relative, the transcendental and the immanent, *res cogitans* and *res extanso*, and all other such conjugates, whether in philosophy or science, could only refer to what is distinguished in the Vedanta as *para* and *apara* Brahman. Different schools of thought might have differing terms which have the same two intersecting parameters for their common reference.

Each of the hundred verses with which we are concerned here, when scrutinized in the light of this structuralism that we have just alluded to, as also in the light of the equation implied in the *para* and *apara* (i. e., the vertical and the horizontal) aspects of the same Absolute, will bring to view as far as possible in non-verbose language, the content of the Absolute seen from the negative perspective of Absolute Beauty as viewed *sub-specie aeternitatus*. Thus, a book that has remained closed to punditry all these years will come to have a significant and practical bearing on our modern life.

YANTRA, MANTRA AND TANTRA

The word *tantra* has to be understood with its other associated terms, which belong together to a certain type of esoterics found in secret India, independently of formulated

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philosophical systems or doctrines. Just as the bed of the river contains some precious deposits mixed with its sand at the bottom, cultures that have flowed down the ages over valleys or plains such as that of the Ganges or the Nile, have often deposited rich nuggets of esoteric wisdom value. The Hermetic, the Cabalistic and the Tarot cards represent such deposits near the Mediterranean cities of antiquity. As in the case of the *I Ching* of China, fortune telling and astrology have their own vague contributions to this body of esoteric wisdom found in different parts of the globe. To change esoterics and present it in a more critically revised form as exoterics is impossible without a normative reference. The *tantra, yantra* and *mantra* are three of the fundamental notions connected with a certain type of esoterics found particularly in Tibet and also in India along the Malabar Coast and Bengal. The central idea of Mother worship and erotic mysticism has nourished this school of thought known as the *Śakti* cult, and kept it alive through ages without being subjected to the corrections of either Vedism or proto-Aryan Śaivite philosophy. Being full of secret mystery, thaumaturgists made use of the vague twilight in which its teachings flourished—mainly in the basements and cellars hidden under old temples or shrines—to participate in certain kinds of orgies where wine and women and flesh-eating figured to support a pattern of behavior known as *vāmācāra* (a left-handed way of life), which the more learned Brahmins would not recognize, under the general name of *Śākteyas* which came to include two sections, the more ancient and cruder section being called *Kauḷins*, and the other section which received at least some recognition from Vedic priesthood, being called *Samayins.* These schools indulge in exorcising evil spirits and in correcting psychological maladjustments by preparing amulets or talismans, the word for which in Sanskrit is *yantra.* It often consists of a scroll of thin metal enclosed in a case of more precious metal, which is tied around the neck. Because of the lucrative nature of such a profession, priestcraft, as anywhere in the world, gave this school its patronage, and thus it has persisted on the Indian soil for ages, independent of any prevailing religious authority at any given time in history.

The *yantras* invariably contain geometric figures with magic letters marking angles, points, lines or circles. The letters

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would correspond to the notion of *mantra*, which depends on a symbolic chant or incantation. The figures themselves are attempted proto-linguistic representations of the same mystery, the technique of which is to be distinguished as *tantra.* It is thus that the terms *yantra*, *mantra* and *tantra* belong together to a certain form of esoteric mystery still attracting the attention of many people, both intelligent and commonplace, where mysteries naturally thrive on a sort of vague twilight background of human thought.

Since Sankara was a guru who wanted to revise dialectically and restate in a proper critically revised form the whole range of the spirituality of his time, he did not overlook the claim of this particular form of esoterics. He wanted to salvage whatever was precious in it and bring it into line with the Upaniṣadic tradition. He had himself the model of the great Kāḷidāsa, whose writings, as his very name suggests, belonged to the same context of Mother worship. Although Kāḷidāsa's works have largely become almost a closed book to even the best pandits of India in the present day, it is still possible to see through a structural analysis of his works, the common lineage that links Sankara with his forerunner Kāḷidāsa and thus take our minds backwards to the great sourse of all the wisdom contained in the Upaniṣads. Speculation had scaled very high in India at the time of the Upaniṣads, which centered around one main notion—the Absolute *(brahman)*. The structural implications of the Absolute found in the mystical language of the Upaniṣads has served as a reference and has nourished subsequent thought down to our own times. In the light of the structuralism that has come into modern thought, as it were, through the backdoor of science, and through the precise disciplines of mathematics going hand in hand with the progress of experimental scientific findings, it becomes possible now to see these ancient writings as consistent with a fully scientific modern outlook.

THE MEANING OF LAHARI

The title ofthis centuary of verses itself underlines its unique characteristic. Each verse when properly understood will be seen to contain two distinct sets of value counterparts. If one of them can be called "physical", the other could be called

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What we are concerned with is not only the alphabet of the world of Beauty, which belongs to the metalinguistical or conceptual side, but at the same time, with its own schematic counterpart which is of a more perceptual order. If the alphabet of the world of Beauty, as monomarks or letters which are essentially symbolic in status, is metalinguistic, the schematic counterpart of the same world of Beauty will be proto-linguistic, consisting of geometric elements such as the triangle, the circle, the line or the point, together with the vertical-horizontal correlates having the figure-of-eight at its very core, to give a dynamism to the total static structure. The various limits within which it lives could be named algebraically by the alphabets, as monomarks for each element. Elements of the world of Beauty could belong together to the context of Absolute Beauty conceived neutrally or normatively. We arrive in this manner not only at alphabets, but elements about which we shall speak in the next section. About the alphabets themselves we could say here in advance that they have a taxonomic value helping us to name and recognize unitive factors in the context of Absolute Beauty. Further implications of such an alphabet of the world of Beauty will become evident when we treat of the actual verses in the present work at their proper places, such as Verse 32, linking letters with elements so as to verify each other and thus lead to the certitude about the content of Beauty which the interaction of these verses reveals, and which justifies the use of this kind of double-sided language of signs and symbols. All alphabets, however analytically understood, have still to be held together at the core of consciousness by the unifying letter *hri* which is the first letter of the word standing for "heart" in Sanskrit. However varied the alphabets might be, they have to have the heart at the core of consciousness to hold them organically together like the hub holding the spokes of a wheel. Thus structuralism and its own nomenclature belong together.

One has to be familiar both with alphabets of Beauty as well as with the elements of Beauty, each from its own side of the total situation. Alphabets could be as many as contained in any language and could include vowels as well as consonants. Each letter could be made to represent a certain characteristic

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forming the component unit or part of the total content of the Absolute. Each of the rays radiating from a point of light could thus have a letter attributed to it for purposes of recognition and nomenclature. Thus, these letters belong to the *mantra* aspect, while the *yantra* aspect is the structure itself. The *savoir-faire* or the know-how aspect of imparting the knowledge about the Beauty could be called the *tantra* aspect of the same. Thus, *tantra*, *yantra* and *mantra* belong together and verify one another to make this sense or experience of Beauty surge up within one's consciousness with an overwhelming force. A sense of Beauty overpowers that person who is able to enter into the meaning of each verse both analytically and synthetically at one and the same time.

ELEMENT OF THE PERCEPTUAL COMPONENTS OF THE WORLD OF BEAUTY

Crystal clear gems, when they reflect or refract or diffract light, represent Beauty in the most evident sense. They have angles, points, lines and colors, and they make various beautiful combinations. Next to gem-beauty comes flower-beauty. The lotus has been the flower dear to the heart of the contemplative Indian mind through the ages. Thus God is praised as having lotus feet, lotus eyes, lotus mouth, lotus in the heart and at the various psycho-physical centers called *cakras* or *ādhāras*.

When structural features belonging to the biological world are abstracted and generalized, we enter the three-dimensional world of conics. Conic sections can be related at various levels to a vertical parameter running through the base of a double-cone, placed base to base. The triangle is only a particular two-dimensional instance comprised within the solid geometry of conics and the apex of each triangle could be turned inversely and a series of interpenetrating triangles could be placed within the cones for purposes of structurally analyzing the total relation-relata complex in the light of which we are to examine the beauty contained in the Absolute.

A vertical symmetry and a horizontal symmetry, the former with a complementarity, the latter with a parity, could be included within the total possible structural perceptual patterns that emerge to view. Parity could imply a right-handed and a

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left handed spin, twist or mirror asymmetry, and complementarity could imply ambivalence, reciprocity or compensation of various intensities. The vertical axis is purely mathematical or logical in status in which degrees of contradiction could be admitted. Time can absorb space and space time; this dynamism which is the basis of modern physics and the very essence of Cartesianism is to be kept in mind here by us. To use our own terminology, there is always to be attributed a polarity, an ambivalence, a reciprocity, a compensatory principle, a complementarity and finally a cancellability between the limbs of the quaternion structure here postulated. At its core there is a vertical back-to-back relation and horizontally there is what might be called a belly-to-belly relation. The latter admits of contradiction and is the basis of all conflict in life. Vertically, however, all shocks and stresses are absorbed and abolished, by mutual cancellation at whatever level of this two sided parameter. There is a dialectical descent and ascent between the positive and the negative poles of the total situation.

Structure thus has to be conceived statically first, and then its own proper dynamism introduced or attributed to it so that we get a global view of all the perceptual component factors that make up the total picture in which the high value called Beauty is to be examined by us in each of the hundred verses. There are subtler factors that enter into the dynamism which we cannot enumerate exhaustively here. They will enter into our interest normally as we focus our attention on the representations implied in each verse.

A flashlight that we hold in our hand when walking through misty darkness can light only a circle within our visible area at a given time, although mist and darkness are not limited to what we can see. Contemplative minds, especially as understood in the logic tradition of India, thus justifiably think in terms of circular or global units of consciousness placed in a vertical series beginning from the bottom pole of this vertical axis and ending at the top pole. Although its physiological position may not correspond to psychological units in terms of consciousness, the vertebral column with a central strand of nervous energy called *suṣumna nāḍi*, together with two other psycho-physical strands, at the left and right respectively, called *iḍa* and *pingala*

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are generally taken for granted in Yogic literature. If we now imagine six zones of consciousness ranging from bottom to top we get the *ādhāras* or *cakras*, sometimes described and elaborated in detail by geometrical and biological analogies such as angles and colored petals in Yoga books.

There are various schools of Yoga, the most important one is that of Patanjali, which uses eight such centers. In the present work however, we find six centers prominently mentioned, each representing a point where the horizontal factors and the vertical factors cancel out to reveal a stable, neutral or normal aspect of the Absolute proper to that particular level. The ambivalent factors always cancel out to yield the same constant Absolute, however varied the pictorial content in which the Beauty is appreciated might happen to be.

The Tarot cards consists of pictorial representations supposed to represent the alphabet of their kind of mysterious schematism of thought. Yoga books also indulge in a similar pictorial language, but on the Indian soil such pictures are mostly nourished by the mythology or analogies proper to the long Sanskrit tradition. This is to be treated only as incidental by the modern man, who can understand the same without mythology by a more positively revised proto-language such as what we adopt and recommend here. The various gods of the Hindu pantheon happen to be themselves structural or functional components to be fitted together, giving us a content for the totality called Absolute Value which is always the interest of any speculation, independent of time or place. Sankara can be seen to have taken full advantage of the implications of this mythological language not because he is religious himself, but because it lends itself admirably to the problem of giving Beauty-content and full significance to the otherwise empty notion of the Absolute.

A WORD ABOUT THE BINDUSTHANA

The first 41 verses of the *Saundarya Laharī* presupposed a contemplative yogi who is seated with shut eyes, representing an introspective withdrawal into the world of inner consciousness. The objective or the positive side of consciousness in relation to the Self will be the "object matter" proper to the rest of the

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composition. When a person properly meditates, his mind attains one-pointedness. This very term presupposes a point, not necessarily on a blackboard but at a locus within one's self, which is referred to in Tantric literature as *bindusthāna*. This focal point is where the global drop of essence or existence resides. When we think of a drop like *bindu* we could think of it as being made of an Absolute Substance, described also by Spinoza as a "thinking substance". We could visualize the same Absolute Substance with its own vertical reference when we add to it the dimension of *res cogitans* as used by Descartes. This vertical element is often referred to in Yogic or Tantric literature as *nāda*, the essence of sound. *Nāda* and *bindu* together participate vertico-horizontally in terms of a thinking substance known as *nādabindu*, which is supposed to be the ontological starting point—the source or place of origination and dissolution—of all that comes to become or to be in the mental or material world.

It is usual in contemplative Sanskrit literature to refer to *nādabindu* in terms of the tender lotus feet of the god or goddess. Only the tenderest part of our mind can participate with an equally tender part of that which we meditate upon, because any participation between subject and object, even to meditation, has to presuppose the principle of homogeneity, which is called *samāna adhikaraṇatva*. The soldering together of two different metals implies this principle; the base metal and noble metal can be made to participate intimately only when there is an equality of status between them. The tenderest devotion thus meets on equal terms the tender petals of the lotus feet of the god. It is therefore usual to put the two feet of the god you are meditating upon at the focal point, where mind and matter cancel out into the neutrality of the thinking substance. The two feet within a lotus could be placed at any point on the vertical parameter, which is cut at right angles by an implied horizontal forest of lotuses, which is independent of the *bindu-sthāna* of meditation. Thus a vertical series and a horizontal series of lotuses is presupposed for structural purposes in each of these verses. The horizontal dimension is incidental only, whereas the vertical reference is the essential parameter that links essence with existence—existence marking the lowest (hierophantic) *alpha* point, and essence marking the highest

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(hypostatic) *omega* point. The point of intersection represents the normative *bindusthāna* proper, but at whatever point in the vertical series (positively or negatively) the feet of the Adorable One might be placed by the contemplative, there is a constant value regulated by the central normative lotus which is always the constant reference.

These are some of the characteristics of this structural language adhered to by classical convention through a tacitly understood *lingua mystica*, coming down to us from pre-Vedic times through the Upanishads, through Kāḷidāsa and through Sankara. It is impossible for us not to recognize the two sets of lotuses radiating from the central lotus at the *bindusthāna*, as suggested in Verse 21. A justification for all that we have said above is found in this verse.

STRUCTURAL DYNAMISM

It is one thing to visualize the alphabets of the elements of structuralism *in situ*, and quite another thing to visualize this structuralism in living or dynamic terms. Yogic meditation is not a static fixation of the attention on objects such as *bindu* which is more mesmerism or crystal-gazing. The *bindu* must be thought of as a target to be reached by the mind that is comparable to a bow fitted with an arrow directed vertically upwards towards the *omega* point. It is reciprocally implied that the bowstring is pulled towards the *alpha* point. The bowstring when thus pulled, would tend to make its own hyperbolic triangular shape, with an apex pointing towards the base of the lower cone, implied in the static structural figure that we have suggested of a double cone placed base to base. The flying arrow reaches the target at the apex of the top cone, while its reciprocal negative dynamism is implied in the tension of the bowstring trying to attain the limit at the *alpha* point. The *alpha* point thus contains a negative psychodynamic content in the form of an introspective or introverted mystical or emotional state of mind full of tender feelings, such as the feeling between mother and child, shepherd and sheep, etc. This is the domain of the weeping philosopher standing for the agony of the mystic.

The stages marked on the plus side of the vertical axis represent brighter and more intelligent states of the psycho-

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physical or psychosomatic self. The coloration tends to be brighter and whiter as the emotional content transforms itself in its ascent by stages into fully emancipated states free from the weight of emotional impact. A rich magenta glory might thus be said to be present even to the normative or centralized psychosomatic vision, though only subjectively experienced by the yogi.

The arrow that flies upward at right angles with a momentum proportionate to the tension of the horizontal bowstring when pulled toward the negative pole of the vertical axis, attains its maximum limit the more it approximates to the *alpha* point when released with maximum tension. The speed and power of penetration of the arrowhead breaks through all barriers cancelling out the arithmetic difference that might persist between the arrow and the target. Thus, there is a cancellation of counterparts along a vertical parameter to be understood with its negative and its positive content, but always having a central normative magenta glory for reference. Such are some of the dynamic features of the structuralism which we have to insert correctly into the same context when we have visualized the static structural features.

Psychostatics and psychodynamics have thus to belong together when we try to get to the bottom of the value that each verse reveals. Each of the 6 or 8 positions usually distinguished as *ādhāras* or *cakras* is to be looked upon as a stable cross-sectional point of equilibrium between counterparts which are always cancelable into normality or neutrality—just as a numerator number of whatever value could be cancelled out against a denomenator value of the same set or category—yielding a constant that remains uniform at whatever position it might be along the vertical parameter. It is always the neutrality of the magenta glory that is revealed when vertical and horizontal factors cancel out within the core of the Absolute.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS IDEOGRAMS

There are many other ideograms besides the bow and arrow which bring into the picture the dynamic aspect of structuralism. We have seen how the lotus flower and the feet figuratively represent ideograms. Now we find a number of secondary

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ideograms which are consistently used as alphabets or elements or both together within the scope of the *lingua mystica*, which is the language employed in this work.

The bee drinking honey from the lotus always implies a factor on the side of the *bhōkta* (enjoyer), as against the honey as the factor on the side of the *bhōgya* (enjoyable). There is a subtle dialectical interaction between these two sets of values: one referring to the subjective world and therefore vertical, the other to the objective world and therefore horizontal. At the point of separation between the vertical and horizontal, we could imagine a row of bees sucking honey, with a corresponding flower for each bee. The horizontal parameter would be the line separating the row of bees each from its flower or the drop of honey it seeks. Instead of a row of bees, sometimes we find a reference to rows of cranes or rows of elephants, which refer to the four quarters of the compass in a sort of vectorial space to be placed within consciousness. Thus, we find the word *dig nāgas*, which means "four or eight elephants, each representing the four or eight points of the compass", to be imagined as playing havoc on or pushing their trunks into a central pole or axis. The crystal imagery, resembling that of a color solid, properly belongs to the base of a vertical axis, while at the neutral 0-point this same crystalline form would resemble a maze, or lattice or matrice of vertico-horizontal lines looking like a cage.

When we think in terms of a radiating light that goes from a point to some universal here or elsewhere, the color solid gives place to its counterpart, to be visualized in terms of two cones placed apex to apex. Thus crystals, shapes, conical sections, radial arrangements in flowers, logarithmic spirals with complementary spins, inversions, transformations, vertical and horizontal axes, all enter into the complex fabric of the dynamics of the structural language employed here. Petals, like apexes of triangles, can represent, together with rays of light radiating outwards, elements of various abstractions or generalizations within the scope or content of the Absolute Value of Beauty here. The letters of the alphabet could be applied preferably to conceptual rays, while lines standing for relations of a here and now ontological character are proper to the crystal which serves

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to explain more ontological relation-relata complexes. The matrice of the center of the axes serves to clarify the four-fold quadrant aspect. The most central dynamism could be the representation by a figure-of-eight, exemplified by the familiar pulsations in electromagnetic interference figures, and also by the systole-diastole function of the heartbeat. Every pulsation could be biologically reduced in its double aspect to conformity with this figure-of-eight which depends on the sine function of waves or frequencies. Wave lengths are horizontal while frequencies are vertical, or *vice-versa*, as the case may be. When inserted together into the same space, they make this figure-of-eight structurally valid in terms of cross-polarized light.

All these figures trace their courses within the grand flux of universal becoming which is the most basic phenomenal manifestation of the neutral Absolute. The universe becomes experienced in most general terms as a process of a flux or becoming. This is what Heraclitus meant when he said that "one cannot enter into the same river twice." Bergson's philosophy supports the same flux in terms of the *elan vital*. Vedantins also think of the universe in terms of a process of flux or becoming when they refer to *māya* as *anādi bhāva rūpa* (of a form of a beginningless becoming), itself having an absolute status. *Māya*, as the negative aspect of the Absolute, however, could yield a normative Absolute which could cancel out the flux, but viewed from the side of relativity to which a living man naturally must belong, the universal flux of becoming is a reality that could finally be abolished only when the total paradox implied between physics and metaphysics is also finally abolished. In this grand flux of becoming, structuralism naturally enters as it does in modern physics, where space and time belong together as conjugates and can be treated as Cartesian correlates. The articulation of space and time gives us the vertical parameter.

FUNCTIONAL MONOMARKS OF GRADED AND DUPLICATED DIVINITIES OR PRESENCES

Dynamism presupposes functions. Eros is the god of Love who has the function of sending arrows to smite the hearts of lovers. Eros, thus, is a demigod or demi-urge who is often represented by the bow and arrow held by him. The bow and

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arrow represent in visual language the monomarks belonging to his function. The three divinities, Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, have their functions of creation, preservation and destruction respectively, which take place within the total scope of the cosmological phenomena comprised within the pure notion of the Absolute. Thus Viṣṇu's function lies structurally in the middle zone, while Brahma brings up the rear and Siva functions as the destroyer of everything at the omega point of nominalistic over conceptualization. Upward and downward logarithmic lines between the lower and the higher limits would indicate the ambivalence between the function of Brahma and that of Siva.

Eros, or Kāmadeva, must have his counterpart Rati as his virtual companion. Siva can destroy Eros only when Eros' presence falls outside the vertical negative parameter. But when occasionalism favors him, as he takes refuge within the vertical negativity of the Absolute, he reigns invulnerably supreme by his own right (Verse 6). The divinities can be either hypostatic or hierophantic in their significance. Where they have a numerator value, they are represented as gods or demigods, but when they have a denominator value they are spoken of as "presences" with an ontological or an existential status (Verse 8).

The devotee, as Sankara himself indicates in the first verse is placed outside the scope of the holy or the sacred at the bottom of the vertical axis, and beyond Siva who marks normally the omega point. Parameśvara, who has a more thin and mathematical status, is to be presupposed as the counterpart of the devotee as his savior. As prayer or worship always implies a benefit between the worshiper and the worshiped, we could imagine an endless series of devotees praying for benefits compatible with them, each placed in duplicate at points marking hypostatic or hierophantic values within the total amplitude of the two-sided vertical parameter. Each of the divinities involved could confer its benefit to the believer or worshiper who constantly meditates on it. All prayers correctly made from the denominator side must necessarily find their compatible response from the numerator side. Such is the time-honored presupposition in all prayer.

Thus, a mathematical Paramaśiva beyond the omega point on the thin parameter has his counterpart in a footstool or

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cushion on the negative vertical side, either for the Devi or himself indifferently. From her toes to the top of her tresses there are subtler values to be arranged back–to-back. Nothing can be omitted, because the universal concrete that the Absolute represents enters even into the essence or existence of the toe-nails and the tuft. Flowers could be hierophantic or hypostatic in origin, or both, according to the circumstances. The waters of the Ganges, representing the high value, can pour down to purify or bless a total situation from the head of Siva down to his feet. When originating at the 0-point, in a lake represented by the navel of the goddess, this water flows horizontally like an actual or geographical river conferring benefits on cultivators. The seventh verse, when scrutinized, will reveal how these levels and dimensions are woven into the structural dynamism as adopted by Sankara.

A DRAMA UNFOLDING WITHIN THE "SELF" AS IN THE "NON-SELF"

The present series of verses could be viewed statically as representing *cakras* or *maṇḍalas*. The *yantra* will give it its dynamism because it suggests a wheel always going around. A picture as well as a drama may be said to be unravelling itself before our vision as the poems unfold to our view various aspects of Absolute Beauty. The dynamism thus superimposed on the structuralism makes the whole series resemble the scenes of a dramatic universe, to be thought of both subjectively and objectively at once. All drama involves personages which are also called characters. Besides the hero and heroine, who between them represent the vertical and horizontal references, there is a villain who is responsible for bringing in the complication which has to be resolved during the presentation of the action of the drama. When the classical rule of the unity of time, place and action is fully respected, as it used to be before the time of the romanticism of Victor Hugo, we get a more global perspective of a comedy or a tragedy with many stratifications of paradises gained or lost, infernos or purgatories incorporated into the picture with Dante and Beatrice, God or Satan, Faust or Mephistopheles as the main personages involved.

A clown or a chorus that can be used to interpret the scenes could add a lighter touch of levity to the total scene. All the

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nine emotional attitudes known to Sanskrit aesthetics ranging from masculine passion to the tenderest emotions of motherhood, could enter into the total complexion that the drama thus unfolds to our view. The bound Prometheus principle supplies the central locus round which action develops radiating polyvalently in all directions. A clown could be an interloper functioning both as a villain as well as a tale-bearer. A strong man could add a Herculean touch in whom hierophany prevails over hypostacy. In the present composition all corresponding personages of the Indian myth can be easily distinguished. Eros is recognized as a complicating character. The presentation and the resolution aspects of the drama have the same Eros involved in them in milder or modified forms as occasion demands. The antinomy between Zeus and Demeter is resolved in the present work by the attempt made in every verse to resolve the paradox involved between them, rather than to enhance the element of contradiction as in classical Greek literature. Śiva and Śakti darticipate in a gentle dialectical way so that a normative cancellation without conflict takes us beyond the contradiction of the paradox. Such is the interplay of the functions of the various characters which are seen to be enumerated in Verse 32 by the author himself.

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1

śivaḥ śaktyā yukto yadi bhavati śaktaḥ prabhavitum
na ced evam devo na khalu kuśalaḥ spanditum api
atas tvām ārādhyām hariharaviriñcādibhir api
praṇantum stotum vā katham akṛtapuṇyaḥ prabhavati

If Siva united with Sakti becomes able to manifest,
If otherwise this God does not know even how to pulsate,
How, then, could one of ungained merit be able to bow to,
or even praise,
One such as You, adored even by Vishnu, Siva and Brahma?

This opening verse squarely poses the paradox of life. Sanskritic literary convention requires that the beginning of any work must indicate: 1. the subject matter or content of the work, 2. the context of the work, i. e., where it belongs in relation to other disciplines or kinds or literature, 3. the overall purpose of the work, and 4. the type of person to whom the work will correctly apply. These requirements are correctly kept in mind by Sankara in this opening verse of *Saundarya Laharī*.

A paradox always implies two rival positions, both of which could be true alternatively or when taken together dualistically. The wise man, the poet, the philosopher, or the spiritual guide has to face this paradox which lurks at the very core of life as its most central problem. It is of a highly subtle, speculative, or philosophical order. Other problems belong to human life in its numerous everyday aspects. In every case, an enigma lurks between two factors such as appearance and reality, mind and matter, theoretical and practical, noumenal and phenomenal, etc, as an endless series of antinomies. Man and woman, father and mother, husband and wife, cause and effect; these are conjugates of the same kind, their relation in every case being of a subtle

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and enigmatic order. Even a word and its meaning belong to each other inseparably, for they cannot be thought of disjunctly from each other.

The Bhagavad Gita refers to this duality by its own terms, as the field *(kṣetra)* and the knower of the field *(kṣetrajña)*. By abolishing the duality between them one attains the Absolute. Thus we come to the notion called the Absolute, which is the same as the *brahman* in Vedantic philosophy, with which Sankara is most directly concerned. It is well known that he stood for *Advaita Vedanta*, a strictly non-dual philosophical position which admits of no reality outside itself. The doctrine of the *Saundarya Laharī* is the same philosophy that he has elaborated in all his great commentaries *(bhāṣyas)* although here it is presented in a non-verbose, visible, and colorfully real, protolinguistic form. Failure to appreciate this fact has made most scholars and authorities treat this work as pertaining only to the discipline of Tantra rather than of Vedanta, thus resulting in a wholly wrong estimation altogether. We have explained this fact in our 'Generalities' above.

Sankara makes Siva and Pārvati represent between them the highest of human values, as easily recognizable even in everyday conjugal life known to all men anywhere in the world. Siva is not a demiurge here, but has his place as the counterpart of his own negative aspect, represented by Pārvati. The relation is a very subtle and enigmatic one. The word and its meaning belong together. The word is merely nominalistic or conceptual but its meaning must refer to human experience without being a mere abstraction. We call the abstraction a concept, while the experienced aspect of the same would be a percept. Thus nominalism and perceptualism, which Vedantins refer to more simply as "name and form" *(nāma rūpa)*, meet and fuse together, cancelling out into what we appreciate as the meaning, which is neither a concept nor a percept, but is the result of the two-sided participation between these opposing aspects.

To give an example, truth and beauty can be thought of as human values resulting from the participation and cancellation of what is visible with what is intelligible. The status of the resultant meaning, represented by the words "Truth" and "Beauty", written with capital letters, falls within the aegis of

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the Absolute. All human values can be treated this way, as Spinoza says, *sub specie aeternitatis*. In *Saundarya Lahari* Sankara combines the beauty of Siva and Pārvati so as to give them together the human value of Beauty, with a capital letter, by which it attains to an overwhelming absolutist status, as suggested by the title of the work itself. Sankara's aim here is to give to the abstract notion of the Absolute the content of absolute Beauty. In doing so he reveals himself as a man of superior poetic genius, by virtue of which the Absolute, otherwise a mere abstraction, comes to have a concrete, real, and visible as well as a truly experiencable content.

Color is a reality. And the twilight color, magenta, has a special central status among all other colors, for it results from the meeting of the infra-red and the ultra-violet. We find as the central theme of each of the hundred verses the personification of the value of the Absolute Beauty in the form of the Goddess who is directly equated with the color magenta *(aruṇa)* (e.g. see Verses 23, 50, 84, 92, 93, 98). Thus the author intends here to bring together two aspects: something fully real and visible on the one side, that is the color magenta, with that which is on the other side as its counterpart, a highly thin and mathematical abstraction which also represents the Absolute, not in visible, but in purely intelligible terms. The universal concrete and the universal abstract are thus inserted into the same neutral or unified ground. By intersection we could say that magenta, as a universal reality, has a horizontal reference where it inseparably participates at the core of the field of consciousness with its own vertical parameter of a highly fourth-dimensional order. Such theoretical matters will become clearer as we proceed. Lesser degrees of abstraction and generalization could give us an endless series of intermediate positions. Each position could then represent, in a hierarchy of values, one item of value always coming under the aegis of the Absolute when correctly placed and cancelled out within the four-fold structural situation. What we must understand here is that Siva and Pārvati, who are mythological figures or divinities of the Hindu pantheon with specific functions attributed to them in the traditional literature of Hinduism, are here being exalted by Sankara to the position of two ambivalent abstract principles—their intimate participation

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having a complementarity, a reciprocity, a compensation, and a cancellability between them.

All overt action or activity is horizontal in status, and therefore must be relegated to the domain of the negative existential principle, which is the function of Parvati. Her reference is at the negative vertical limit of the four-fold structural whole previously described. This participation between Siva and Parvati takes place at the very core of the total situation, ground or field. Siva, as the positive principle within this same field, is to be visualized as a thin vertical parameter, having his reference at the hypostatic or positive vertical limit of this quaternion situation. No kind of action, except in the most purely mathematical sense, applies to him. He is a kind of "unmoved Mover" of Aristotle, who, like the catalyst in chemistry, while acting, is not really acting at all.

The distinction here can be compared to time-like and space-like functions. Horizontal action is space-like, while vertical action is time-like, spending itself in duration, which is purely conceptual in its status. If we abstract this paradox of concept and percept even further, it abolishes itself by double assertion or by double negation, both of which attain that Absolute which is beyond paradox. Such are some of the subtleties which must be kept in mind by the intelligent reader who examines the content of this centuary of verses starting from this very first one. Without doing so, the reader is likely to make the error of treating this work as a theological or cosmological scripture or even a textbook of Tantra meant only for religious or philosophical study by persons lesser in their cultural interest than the uncompromising Advaita Vedantin, like Sankara himself, who is to be kept in mind as the *adhikāri* (the type of person for whom these verses are meant). It is in this sense that Sankara takes care to indicate that he is outside the scope of that kind of Vedic religious orthodoxy which thinks in terms of holiness or meritorious works when he says here that, he is incapable of praising or even saluting the absolute principle of Beauty here intended. The way of works and merits is unequivocally rejected by him in this verse as being outside his scope or intentions. We have to read this first verse together with the last verse of this work, where he again washes his hands of any intention to present a specific religious doctrine, which ordinary religious

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people might infer that he is tacitly supporting. The Absolute is proved by itself, and should be left alone to declare its glory to the world.

In this very first verse the reader can see that Sankara wishes to emphasize the necessity of thinking of Siva and Sakti as belonging together to the one and only unitive content which is that of the value called Absolute Beauty. It is a great mistake to separate the functions of the twin counterparts that are meant to enter into a unified non-dual function here. Mother worshipers in India are likely to make the mistake of saying that the beauty of the three worlds represented by the Goddess, sometimes referred to as Sakti or Tripura Sundari, is to be given primacy over the Siva principle. They tend to forget that the basic cancellability of status between these two counterparts (male and female, positive and negative, vertical and horizontal, conceptual and perceptual, etc.), is all important to keep in mind throughout the unfoldment of this sequence of verses. To forget this idea is to fall into the error of duality, the most repugnant attitude for Advaita Vedanta. The Kaulins, and perhaps the Samayins, were just such Sakti worshipers, whose unilateral position Sankara must have wanted to correct and revalue by undertaking this present work.

Another point to notice in this verse is that when Siva is not united with Sakti, he has no function at all. Some commentators say he becomes *śava*, a dead body, when he is not united with the feminine principle. This is to forget that a correlating parameter running through the whole universe and able to order or ordain it, making cosmos out of choas, is as important a function as any other function or aspect of the same Absolute. Here a form of pure verticalized action is implied as running through the world like the guiding thread of Ariadne, without which Theseus would never have been able to ascend out of the labyrinth of the Minotaur. Even the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, which eliminates all functions and even predications when it refers to the highest Absolute in its final verdict—describing the ultimate Absolute as removed multi-dimensionally beyond all taint of relativity or predicability—still retains a certain auspicious value or attribute referred to there as *śāntam śivam advaitam* (peaceful, auspicious, non-dual). A further qualification is mentioned immediately anterior to these final epithets by the words *prapañcōpaśamam*, referring to that principle which abolishes the

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phenomenal world, that is, all that has a horizontal reference. Thus to distinguish clearly the implied paradox, so as to finally abolish it correctly without violating the requirements of an absolutist epistemology, methodology or axiology is of great importance from the very start. Science and mathematics, physics and metaphysics, the visible and the intelligible, are all counterparts that have to be treated as belonging together to an Absolutist whole.

There is in this verse a reference to the three gods, Brahma, Viṣṇu and Siva, who have three distinct functions to perform within the totality of the field in which Siva and Parvati live together. The value of the union itself is the ground of the Absolute, and the three functionaries are to be inclusively contained therein as having only a secondary importance. With any number of other gods, permissible under the aegis of the Absolute, this eternal union of male and female represents the resultant of the absolute value of Beauty. In mathematical terms this union is just a cancellation taking place between the vertical and the horizontal parameters, the latter of which can be thought of as a curved or asymptotic line (perimeter) while the former could be a straight line (parameter).

The three main functionaries represented here are fully justified and they could be recognized even by strict scientifically minded persons when we treat them each as having the status of a factor with a function belonging to it, as when we say that $y=f(s)$ in algebra. Thus the mythological personifications can be disregarded as merely incidental to the exigencies of language. Other monomarks could be chosen to refer to these same functions, which are creation, preservation and destruction. These three functions are inevitable concepts in the context of the cosmological, psychological and axiological processes taking place in the universe within the Self or the non-Self, when thought of in most general and abstract terms. Mythology is less positive than mathematics, as August Compte would put it. The positively minded modern man need not take mythology seriously. (These demiurges could be treated as monomarks for the three functions understood in the abstract, where the grand process of becoming in the universe can be thought of as coming under the inevitable functional phases or aspects of beginning, enduring and disappearing, to one or the other of which three phases, any process inner or outer, must conform.)

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These three gods or demiurges belong to the Vedic context. Vedanta is outside mere Vedism but does not conflict with it, just as an expansive lake could hide within it a well. Vedism, with its distinctions of meritorious actions and sin based on the notions of the sacred and the profane, could be inclusively transcended or submerged within the scope of the more open and generous dynamism of the Advaitic outlook. We have to distinguish the two limiting points within the scope of spiritual progress. (Just as the river Rhone expands into the lake of Geneva at one end, but passes out at the other end as a thin stream again—to use one of Henri Bergson's favorite examples—one could place oneself at the lower expanding limit of the river or at the upper contracting limit of the lake in a vertical perspective, without coming into conflict with less absolutist religious disciplines, which are vitiated by hedonistic or relativistic considerations.) This first verse marks the lower limit. By the time the discussion reaches the last verse, spiritual progress through works has attained to its maximum maturation, thus effectively abolishing its own importance, just as the same water can transcend to become a simple river again. The three gods thus come into the picture only between the lower and higher limits of the total situation to be kept in our minds here. Sankara himself prefers not to enter into the context where merits and demerits, or causes and effects, or obligations and taboos come into interplay within these two limits. The effects of good works accrue only at the upper limits. Sankara, at the start here, correctly places himself before any action and reaction or cause and effect begin to operate. He wishes to remain a strict absolutist in keeping with his own neutral and normalized position, giving equal importance to both cause and effect. He takes his stand preferably before the causes even begin to operate. He is thus removed from all taint of the phenomenal process of becoming. Transcending this, he is again seen at the end to be outside the scope of the fourth dimension set-up in which alone good or bad could interact. This is the reason why he takes care to underline in this verse that he is one of unaccomplished merits, unlike the demiurges who are caught within the process and strive to attain the positive limit which is the culminating point for all meritorious actions.

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Vedanta is a negative way *(nivṛtti mārga)*. That is a further reason why this description, as evidently applicable to himself as well as the correct reader, is treated as being outside the scope of both merit and demerit taken together. When speaking of himself in this manner, we are also justified in thinking that he is indirectly referring to the *adhikāri* (the kind of person to whom this work applies), which refers to any member of the public having the same status as himself in the total situation to be visualized here. This could be done by what is called extrapolation in mathematics. The subject matter of this work as the value of Beauty under the aegis of the Absolute, is correctly seen in the context of Vedantic tradition, which transcends the Vedic context in which the three gods aspire for perfection by works of religious merit, being placed at the positive top limit of the structural vision. As a Vedantin, Sankara himself takes his position initially on the negative side of the total situation, opposed to all aspiration, as is in keeping with the *nivṛtti mārga* of *brahmavidya* (the Science of the Absolute) understood in the Upanishadic context.

In the Upanishadic tradition there is a reference in the *Kena Upaniṣad* to the situation in which three gods—Agni (god of Fire), Vāyu (god of Wind), and Indra (the chief of the gods)—stand puzzled about the nature of a Supreme Spirit *(yakṣa)* that presents itself in a vacant space before them. That is the positive Absolute, which is approached closest by Indra, the best of the demiurges. The same space then suddenly reveals the beautiful form of Uma, the daughter of the Himalayas representing the negative aspect of the same Absolute without contradiction or mutual exclusion. The beauty of Uma (Pārvati) here treated as interchangeable in value with what the Absolute represents, thus affords us a correct precedent acceptable to the teaching of the Upanishads, of which *Saundarya Laharī* could be treated as a correct continuation.

Siva worship is proto-Aryan and chiefly of South Indian origin, but the Upanishadic tradition blends both Aryan and proto-Aryan and Dravidian cultures, as is unequivocally implied in Verse 75. These comments on this first verse are to be taken as important preliminary clarifications for the understanding of the remaining verses also.

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2

tanīyāmsam pāmsum tava caraṇapaṅkeruhabhavam
viriñciḥ sañcinvan viracayati lōkān avikalam
vahaty enam śauriḥ katham api sahasreṇa śirasām
haras samkṣudyainam bhajati bhasitoddhūlanavidhim.

The fine dust arising out of Your lotus feet
Brahma, gathering it up, creates the worlds;
Viṣṇu incessantly bears them up somehow,
with thousand heads;
And Siva, having pulverized them, accomplishes
with this his ash-wearing rite.

In this verse the individual function of each of the three demiurges is fitted into a common scheme as attributes of the same unifying vertical parameter running through their three functions. It is important to remember that it is not an ordinary universe which we have to presuppose or postulate in this verse, but rather the *monde affine* known to modern physics, which we have to visualize as a starting datum for the purposes of this work. There is direct reference to fine particles, whether in the form of botanical pollen, of matter seen in mineral crystals, or as finely divided matter independent of the states of solid, liquid or gas. Particle physics speaks an exponential language of many decimal points to describe the immensity or minuteness of the worlds of astronomy or quantum physics. The telescope and the microscope are magnifying instruments which bring nearer to our view the frontiers of the macrocosm and the microcosm, within which the observable world exists for us. Placed between these two worlds in our own mysterious universe, which is capable of expanding or contracting through processes of explosion or implosion, endosmosis or exosmosis, and entropy or negentropy.

Sources of cosmic rays have been found to be both bright spots and black holes, wherefrom streams of energy units like

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neutrinos may enter our cosmos and disappear through another hole. Modern physics presently speaks even in terms of particle and anti-particle, and matter and anti-matter, yet the very structure of the space in which we live is still a profound mystery to the best of physical theorists to the present day. Particles of matter seem to have smaller planet-like bodies with left-handed or right-handed spins (or both) floating round them just as in the solar or galactic space. Here supernovae, red gaints and white dwarfs, with their color schemes based on a periodic law to which all matter is chemically subject, heighten the mystery even of the physical world which is the normal environment of us ordinary human beings. The wonderful color patterns produced by cross-polarized light through the spectroscope reveals the structure of the minutest of crystals when polarized and analyzed through the help of short wave rays. The red and violet shifts give us evidence, though indirectly only, of a universe expanding or contracting at a speed approximating the velosity of light. In modern times it would not be incorrect thus to assert that there is little difference between scientific myth-making and the ordinary myth-making tendency so natural to man ever since literature began to influence human life. The creation of the universe is said to have taken place by a "big bang", according to some advanced physicists, while other experts think of this creation in terms of a "steady state". Modern science is thus in the process of putting every favorite notion into the melting pot called scientific knowledge.

It is the task of the bold speculator to attempt to reconstruct a cosmos out of this kind of intellectual chaos. If he is not able to put some order into these diverse relativistic knowledges, there will occur disruption of human values leading to a confused state of mind, the signs of which are already evident in modern society. Therefore it is very important for the reader's understanding of Verse 2 to try to look at the universe from a thoroughly revised perspective from that which we have been accustomed by convention hitherto.

We have already said that Absolute Reality could be viewed from either the conceptual or perceptual perspectives, the latter being placed at a lower point in the degree of generalization or abstraction implied. The increase of energy or voltage in the positive direction results in the higher version of the same

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Absolute without abolishing its basic content. The higher subsumes the lower and the lower assumes the higher. Within the lower Absolute, postulated for purposes of speculative scrutiny, we should first insert the three grand processes of creation, preservation and destruction as three horizontal stratifications which are traversed vertically by a single correlating parameter, without which they might fall apart and lose their global unity. The universe in the form of an eternal process or flux of becoming was understood by Heraclitus of ancient Greece, and finds approval even by modern critical philosophers such as Bertrand Russell, who calls Heraclitus the first scientific philosopher. Bergson supports the same hylozoistic point of view and even goes to the extent of inverting "topsy-turvy" the whole set-up of the universe when he ends his work, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, with the statement that the universe is a machine for the fabrication of gods. The scientific perspective can be said to take a teleological starting point for its speculation. The former ascends from cause to effect and could be called ascending dialectics, while the latter takes its stand on end results or effects, teleologically, and employs descending dialectics to enter into the very heart of reality hereunder. Between the opposing forces of contraction and expansion, evolution and involution, entropy and negentropy, explosion and implosion and other such antinomial factors—all acceptable to present day philosophers of science or scientific philosophers—the modern man stands, trying to decide which way to turn.

The three gods, Brahma, Viṣṇu and Siva, enter into the series of verses in several places, and it is necessary to fit their functions dynamically, as well as statically, into the overall context of the Absolute, before we can fill in this lower or negative perspective of the Absolute with a value significance or content which is so necessary for intelligent living in an environment where a regulated hierarchy of human values enter as interests to choose from within the scope of the total ecological setting within which we have successfully to live and move. Thus we have to view reality in its structural, functional, ontological, existential and even pragmatic aspects in order to do justice to all the opportunities that present themselves to us moment after moment in our lives. Everyday problems do not demand the same intelligence as the problem of

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final salvation, with which humanity has always been interested. Otherwise there would not be religions or churches, scriptures or rituals, towers or spires—all standing on modern utilitarian or idealistic institutional life. Brahma here represents the aspirational, Viṣṇu the hedonistic, and Siva the idealistic or tragic aspects of life. We have explained that if the mythological language of the Indian tradition should be repugnant to persons outside its normal climate, we could substitute more scientific and mathematical terms, idioms, ideologies and ideograms to describe the same meaning.

Brahma is said to be a lotus-born god, belonging to a botanical or biological context. The lotus is the favorite flower dear to the Indian mind, and its haunting beauty has enriched the similies and metaphors of poetry through the ages. A flower represents the dream of a plant, just as a crystal could represent the dream of a supersaturated liquid. A flower emerges from theo therwise dull background of the world of botany and looms into general consciousness not unlike a colorful globe of light, displaying its variegated beauty to attract and please the eyes of man. It is the most basic object of beauty in this world, having its origin in mud and dirt, as particularly true of the lotus-flower. Each flower is a global and structural unit, complete in itself, and if we put three circles around it and its beauty, as conceived in abstract and general terms, we could easily insert such a globe of light within our own total consciousness. It could occupy, at plus or minus levels, a position in the vertical axis or in any one of the ramified sets of possible positions. Brahma, as the four-headed, lotus-born god, is to be placed within a qualitative space of the individual or collective consciousness of man and treated as a phenotype to mark the source of all creative activity. As the lotus blooms within time, the four-headed god, each of whose faces turns towards one of the four points of the compass, would give us a concrete image of creation as a visualizable process in the form of a personified agent with the specific function of creation, who is to be placed at the ontological negative vertical limit called the alpha point.

As the process of growth and division proceeds sufficiently forward in pure verticalized terms, we transcend the world of

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biology into another order where solidity of matter, characterized by mutual impenetrability of particles, initiates a horizontalizing exclusiveness between each unit. This results in what we understand as *terra firma* which consists mostly of silicon dioxide crystals, each of which seems to be fighting to preserve its own space from being occupied by another crystal at the same time. Without this *terra firma* the drama of life itself could not be acted out. All human aspirations must have a firm basis as a foothold, without which no value could ever be enjoyed even for a split second. This is the parameter, however thin in its functional amplitude, that we have to allow in favor of Viṣṇu, who is represented as sleeping on a thousand-headed serpent, *Ananta*, in a milk-ocean, symbolically representing the life value of nourishment spread generously all around, at the basis of human life itself. Salvation would lose its meaning without such a basis. Viṣṇu as a universal concrete principle, is represented also by a small golden fish, *Matsya*, who grew to immense proportions; by a tortoise, *Kūrma*, who supported a mountain on his back for the churning of the milk ocean; and by a boar, *Varāha*, who, by his hard tusks, killed the demon *Hiraṇyākṣa* and brought the earth back the surface of the ocean. The fish, tortoise and boar, which are said to be successive incarnations of water-loving creatures, are evidently to be placed in a vertical series, beginning at the alpha point or negative limit. There are many Sanskrit texts which lend support to the view that Viṣṇu supports from below all the hypostatic worlds above. The horizontal expansiveness of space in terms of quantity stands for the firm earth; the schematic representation of the same would be the horizontal axis. Thus we arrive at a general notion of the function of Viṣṇu.

Now when we pass over this horizontal parameter, represented by Viṣṇu, at the equatorial region of the total situation and enter into the world of vertical values of a more and more teleological order, and pass through the immensities of empty spaces, i.e., the interstellar space of our own universe, the same vertical parameter followed far enough takes us to the domain of Siva. as the universal principle of destruction. Creation would not have any meaning without its own counterpart, dissolution. Heat and cold belong together; the same is true of birth and

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death. In the same manner existence and essence have also to belong necessarily together, whether we wish to die early or not. If grandmothers and grandfathers refuse to die, what will be the lot of this world? Surely a somber and vegetative picture, full of sadness and frustration, would be the state of humanity if Siva refused to function as the most "generous" principle of destruction, at least in the paradoxical sense of Shakespeare's dictum, "sweet are the uses of adversity". Every reality must have a container which has a lid at the other end, just as a jug cannot be open at both ends. This is known in Vedic literature as the principle of the inverted cup, or in the West, as the phenomenological principle of bracketing. Heat must be countered by cold, and creation by destruction, in any process conceived in its totality. Modern phenomenologists have tried to describe human life as an *epoche*, enclosed within brackets, one being evidently at the top and the other at the bottom. Siva's function has thus to be put in its proper structural perspective. This task is not easy even for modern physicists, but in the sequence of verses that follows the ancient speculative tradition in India takes up this challenge with as much confidence and dignity at least as modern theoretical physics.

Gray ashes and nourishing food, such as rice and water, mark the limits or brackets between which human life is destined to fulfill itself. There is a complementarity, reciprocity, compensation and cancellation between these two limits as life unfolds corrected and harmonized within these ambivalent tendencies. Ashes cancel out against nourishing rice and water into the central value represented by mother's milk, as so touchingly alluded to in Verse 75. Milk represents the generosity of the Absolute, viewed from the perspective of motherhood.

Siva thus occupies the omega point or highest limit in the vertical axis of the total system of contemplative values. He is represented as dancing in the graveyard in the Śaivite literature of South India, in the temple at Chidambaram dedicated to him, and in the world famous bronze of the dancing Nataraja. He is known as the City Burner, descending with flame in hand, while himself engulfed in the flames of his own austere way of life. He is not an auspicious god in the conventional sense, but one who can bring to bear on the total situation that positive touch,

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without which life would be meaninglessly lopsided. He represents the principle of tragic cancellation. Thus, it is apt to describe him as smearing his body with ashes while revelling in the positive principle of tragedy. When cancelled against his own negative counterpart, the Absolute Beauty is both tragic and comic at once. The Absolute transcends both, and is beyond both good and bad, beyond all dualities. Such are some of the guidelines to be kept in mind when scrutinizing this second verse, by the light of which the three stratified functions within the total scope of the Absolute Universe could be easily visualized by the reader without further explanation.

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3

avidyānām antas timira mihira dvīpa nagarī
jaḍāṇām caitanyastabaka makaranda sruti charī
daridrāṇām cintāmaṇi guṇanikā janma jaladhau
nimagnānām damṣṭrā muraripu varāhasya bhavatī.

To the uninstructed, You are the city of light, banishing inner darkness, placed in mid-ocean,
To inert ones, the mind expanding honey that oozes from celestial blossoms,
While for indigent spirits, You become a cluster of philosopher's stones,
And for those submerged in the birth-cycle ocean, the very tusk of Viṣṇu's boar.

A four-fold quaternion structure is evidently implied in this verse, although such a structure is not easy to imagine in rigid geometrical lines on the surface of two dimensional paper. There are presented within the scope of this verse four types of spiritual aspirants. To place each of them correctly in their proper positions in the qualitative perspective of beauty, within which each has to find his own place, brings us face to face with a problem which is important to solve correctly from the very beginning.

Vedantic literature knows of a similar four-fold distinction of types of aspirants, such as in the Bhagavad Gita, where we read of one who is steeped in affliction, another who has a desire to know the truth, a third is fond of gaining the goods of life, and the fourth represents a wise one. The same four types are presented here also, but their aspirations or interests are brought under more poetically elaborated value worlds representing the item of interest most attractive to each type of aspirant: they are the uninstructed, the inert, the indigent and the suffering. These four types are to be inserted into a four-fold frame of reference, with a one-to-one correspondence

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between what each one is in himself and what his aspiration represents. When a man's interest cancels out against what he is, his dignity attains to a meaning which refers to his own proper Absolute Value. Just as when Shakespeare says that the dress makes up the man, or when the Gita equates faith with the person who is faithful, there is an interchangeability and reversibility to be understood here between the Self and the non-Self. The passion of an Othello possesses him completely so that he becomes identical with it. In the same sense, Shakespeare elsewhere uses the expression, "the play is the thing." This way of treating Self and non-Self unitively and of placing them together within a subjective and contemplative world of value is quite a normal way in the literature of Advaita Vedanta. Each man is known by his master interest, just as each mathematical term is known by its function, or as a tree is known by its fruit.

The seeker of wisdom of the first line, described as the uninstructed, is the most respectable of the four types that are designated in a certain structural order of gradation. He could be thought of as one whose main interest is to know the truth; he believes in sayings like, "Thou shalt know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free". He aspires for that glorious day when emancipation will come to him. He is a dreamer, steeped in the darkness of ignorance, who envisions before him the beautiful circular structure described in this first line. The "city of God on high" called Civitas Dei, is an idealized Acropolis placed on the top of a hill in the Augustinian imagination. Here, however, we notice that the "city of light" is placed in the middle of an ocean. When we apply the structural frame of reference to this situation, we could imagine the perspective of this aspirant to be from a central position in any circular cross-section that we could take within the quarter of the apex of the lower cone, while the "city of light" here can be seen as a cross-section at a corresponding position within the upper cone. The lower inverted cone is negative and can therefore represent darkness, from which this aspirant seeks the light from above the cross-sectional plane dividing the two cones, placed base to base. The meaning of this first kind of aspirant becomes clear to us when we visualize truth or wisdom as the non-Self on the

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positive numerator quarter while the uninstructed ignoramus, as the counterpart of his own aspiration, can be seen to be on the negative or denominator side of the quaternion. We shall find this same mental island elaborated further in later verses.

To visualize the inert man of the second line, who is fond of the ordinary pleasures of life, and to correctly place him in his proper structural perspective, we have only to think of a day-dreaming fat boy type character like Kumbhakarṇa of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, or Joe in Dicken's *Pickwick Papers*. Literature is familiar with many such fat boys. This kind of aspirant is interested only in the merriment of eating, drinking and sleeping, and he is never bothered by the harsh pinch of necessity. We could thus visualize this inert man on the left or virtual side of the horizontal parameter as the counterpart of the actual item of his fancy, which can be seen on the horizontal right side in the quaternion structure.

The third line refers to a man who is actually poor and "cannot make ends meet" in his everyday life. The indigent spirit is haunted by the love of wealth which never actually reaches his hand. An example of this type of aspirant might be a kind of scholar gypsy, who, by too much book learning, is unable to make a livelihood. Having missed his occasion to succeed, he is troubled about somehow making good, without being serious about the philosophy which he espouses. He hopes one day to come to good luck and keeps dreaming about such a value in a Pharisaic or dilettantish manner. Such a type fits in the numerator side of the total four-fold situation.

The afflicted or suffering man of the fourth line, submerged in the birth-cycle-ocean, is stifled and suffocating due to lack of free air to breath. His repeated efforts only cause him to rise and sink alternately in this ocean of necessity. His main desire is to climb to a level where he could at least breathe the fresh air, ridding himself of this suffocating world of necessity. To free himself from such a dire circumstance, he seeks only that which is factual, decisive or firm, with the ontological richness of the hard tusk of Viṣṇu's boar (Verse 2). As an example of this type of aspirant we could think of a person who has badly lost in business and suffered bankruptcy. In this state of mind

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his only desire is to stand up in the world as a solvent person once again. The indigent spirit can thus be placed on the factual right side of the horizontal parameter.

The intention of the author in this verse is evidently to make the student sufficiently familiar with the implied quaternion structure. The further elaboration of its subjective implications should become more precise and convincing as we proceed in this work.

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help of Cartesian coordinates. Thus the Absolute Goddess is negativity, while there could be innumerable classes and sub-classes of divinities which could answer prayers or grant benefits in an endless variety of gestures or favors. While at the numerator end the possibilities are located in the infinity of possible effects, when the locus is fixed in the denominator aspect, at the feet of the Goddess, we could think of the one and unique end result or benefit of Absolute Wisdom alone accruing to the votary, seeker or supplicant, to the exclusion of all other miscellaneous benefits that ordinary human beings may be interested in. Praying for particular favors is called *upāsana* and because the value implied therein is paltry and transient, the absolutist Vedantin, who is more wholehearted, discountenances all such devotional conduct or behavior and prefers only to know the Truth. Such are some of the methodological and doctrinal secrets which Sankara wants to insist upon in this verse.

The reference to "more-than-asked-for boon" in this verse may require some explanation. Ordinary prayer is answered according to the mechanistic law of action and reaction being equal and opposite, following an arithmetical way of justice of a "tooth for a tooth" order. On the other hand, when one says that if a man asks for a shirt, give your coat also, there is a generosity which is not arithmetical. The good Samaritan and the father of the prodigal son have a sense of justice and generosity which is of a higher order than a merely quantitative justice. Bergson distinguishes between natural Justice, with a capital letter, and the justice which is measured out quantitatively between the two scales of a balance. Absolute Justice is natural and open-minded in its generosity. The absolutist attitude has been compared to that of a gambler in the Gita and follows the law of "partial stimulus: total response." It is in this sense that the "more-than-asked-for boon" given by the grace of a Goddess enjoying an absolutist standpoint contrasts with relativistic items of benefit derived from lesser divinities.

In the second line it is understood that hand gestures are part of the stone language by which the icons communicate to the votary. Generally it is by gesture with one or more hands that the response from the side of the deity is conveyed to the

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devotee. Such gestures are called *mudras* and the wisdom-gesture given by a Guru to a disciple is the highest of them. There are four well-known gestures, each given by one of the four hands. The *varada*, that of boon-giving or benediction, is one. The gesture of protection is called *abhaya* in which the hand points at a foot to indicate that the devotee should surrender himself to the feet of the divinity for refuge. Another hand can carry a weapon, which is indicative of the anger or punishment involved. The fourth hand might carry a flame or some symbolic totem. Viṣṇu's four hands are distinguished by the conch, discus, mace and lotus. Subrahmaṇya is recognized by his lance, and Rāma by his bow. The rosary and book belong to Sarasvati, while Kāḷi can have many arms and hands, as in Cāmuṇḍi. Four monomarks held by four hands, which are bow and arrow, noose and goad, belong to the structuralism of the Absolute Goddess portrayed here, as presented to us in Verse 7 and others, where the hand gestures of this stone language are referred to. The foot or the twin feet have primacy over all such numerator value monomarks as the bow, arrow, noose and goad. Existence has primacy over essence, at least for methodological requirements.

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5

haris tvām ārādhya praṇata jana saubhāgya jananīm
purā nārī bhūtvā puraripum api kṣobham anayat
smaro'pi tvām natvā ratinayana lehyena vapuṣā
munīnām apy antaḥ prabhavati hi mohāya mahatām.

Once Viṣṇu, having adored You, the Mother that bestows
blessings on those who worship You,
Taking womanly form; even to the City-Burner caused agitation;
Eros, too, with body licked into reality by the glances of Rati,
on worshipping You,
Is able to bring confusion of values even to the minds of
great recluses.

This verse brings us one step closer to the main content or subject matter of this series of verses. Since the central theme of this work is erotic mysticism, the God of Love has to be understood first. Man finds woman beautiful and vice versa, because between their forms there is operative a subtle parity, reciprocity, complementarity or cancellability, in terms of pure action. The embrace of man and woman represents a form of pure and subjective action between values which could be called counterparts. The joy or the bliss that results therefrom is not a value to be excluded from the total scope of eternal or absolute values. There is an interaction between contemplative and worldly interests involved in this kind of conjugal joy. The Goddess cannot experiense it by herself or by itself. The life principle that enjoys it has to participate with both the pure or sacred values on the one side and the more profane values on the other. The experience of love, which is so well known to young men and women, is such a serious matter that there is not one year in which some suicide pact between a young couple does not occur in one region or another. Like hunger, which has no limbs nor any exact position within the stomach only, love can pervade and possess the whole personality of a man or a woman

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at a given moment. This given moment is regulated by the principle of occasionalism, as known in Cartesian philosophy, by which the will of God and the disposition of man cancel out on occasions which are fully favorable. It is in this sense that Othello's passion fills him so completely that he becomes a tragic hero of the fullest stature. A Cosette and a Marius find themselves in each other's arms before they are even conscious of what they are about. Instances of this kind can be multiplied indefinitely from the world's best literature.

Love is a noble sentiment, laudable in one perspective, but not so much in another. Shakespeare's sonnets contrast the real difference between true and false love. The Upanishads do not treat legitimate love as a forbidden fruit, but include it within the scope of absolute joy that the soul of even a dignified man should be capable of enjoying. Kāḷidāsa's *Kumāra Saṁbhava* is perhaps one of the best classical examples on this subject. Siva forever remains the leader of ascetics even though in the last verse of this work, he is represented as living eternally in the bedchamber of the Goddess, refusing even breakfast. Here the paradox of eroticism is faced squarely without making this subject either wholly profane or wholly sacred. It is the principle of the non-dualistic Absolute alone that can finally dissolve this paradox. Eroticism can have the dignity of mysticism only when contradiction at the core of profane love has been fully abolished. This task is exactly what Sankara undertakes in the present series of verses, and in this verse he clears the ground for viewing the subject of erotic mysticism in the structural perspective proper to it. Further, it is important that such a perspective falls correctly within the aegis of Absolute Beauty, because it is beauty of the female which is the very occasion for erotic mysticism to come to be talked about at all. The expression *sub specie eternitatis* of Spinoza, explained elsewhere, describes this unitive perspective. The passion of Othello becomes a Passion, with a capital letter, when it falls within the ambit of the Absolute on a given occassion. This is the reason why men are said to "fall in love," and justifies somewhat the popular saying that "marriages are made in heaven."

Eros, as known in the Greek context, is represented in some paintings as a winged angel that descends onto the body of a

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beautiful woman from above. The Sanskritic Eros is called *Anaṅga* or *Manasija* (The Limbless One or Mind-born God). His position in the structural set up is in the peripheral region of the base of the lower, rather than the upper, of the two cones placed base to base. With his bow and arrow made of flowers, he lies in wait for the proper occasion to make young lovers fall for each other as they sit in a garden in the flowery season, called *vasanta* in India, when the cuckoos sing and the mangoes put out their blossoms and tender magenta leaves. The *elan vital* in nature operates with highest pressure on this occasion, when mentally pictured with the gentle Malaya breeze and other concommitant circumstances favorable to the function of this god. Details about the behavior of Eros and his own wife, Rati, are depicted in detail in Kāḷidāsa's *Kumāra Saṁbhava*. We shall have occasion to return to this same subject in the verse that follows. Like hunger, love has no limbs. As an inner experience it is an amorphous entity that can pervade all the limbs of one's body at a given moment. The Mind-born God *(Manasija)* is thus considered limbless *(Anaṅga)*. One might ask how he could send his flowery arrows without limbs. His bow and arrows are made of flowers to show that his instruments as well as his limbs belong to a very tender and neutral order in which matter and mind are interchangeable and can participate both ways. Life is the principle that links matter and mind, and it is exactly at this point of meeting that the Mind-born God, Eros, has his being.

Without anticipating what we shall have many more occasions to elaborate, let us fix our attention in this verse to the divinity called Viṣṇu, who is said to have assumed a beautiful female form to distract the attention of Siva on the occasion mentioned in the Bhāgavata of the churning of the milk–ocean. In this incident he was named *Mōhini*. By his intervention Viṣṇu was able to avert a conflict that would have otherwise become a disastrous situation. Viṣṇu's structural position is more centrally located, perhaps a little below the middle of the vertical parameter. It is because of his special normalized absolute position, falling within the scope of the vertical parameter itself, which is of a fourth dimensional order within the structural totality, that he is able to attract the attention of Siva himself, in spite of the latter being the most austere of austere divinities. These mythological

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anecdotes or episodes are not to be directly depended upon by us in this commentary. We only allude to them in passing so that they could lend whatever verification they might to our approach, which is one that is primarily nearer to a mathematical structuralism proper to science, treated as integrating physics and metaphysics.

Though Eros is placed in the lower cone, with base upwards, the value principle implied in him can, at a particular moment, permeate the whole structural field, giving to it a red or magenta hue throughout. The recluses referred to in the fourth line are generally persons who have left their homes to live in Himalayan retreats for the purpose of practising various lukewarm degrees of austerities, usually to forget something in their past, like an unhappy married life. The intensity of their devotion to austere ways of life could be great, which would justify the epithet "great recluses" in this verse, but it is to be understood that their detachment has not attained to the positive heights of that leader of all ascetics, Siva. The influence of erotic values could still be dominant in the minds of such recluses, compromising its absolutist status, however great their lopsided dedication to an austere life might be. It is in this sense that the mountain-daughter, Pārvati is said in the *Kumāra Saṁbhava* to be respected even by *munis* (recluses). Even after leaving their homes the appeal of a beautiful woman can perturb their minds, causing some confusion of values within their hearts. Such a view finds support in the poetry of Kāḷidāsa, where a traveler from a distant land, seperated from his once favorite wife, bursts into tears when reminded of his lost felicity even by the sight of a beautiful tree laden with flowers waving in the breeze. These recluses, as ordinary human beings, still belong to the horizontal plane and are to be situated somewhere peripherally between the bases of the two cones in the structure.

The reference to the body of Eros being licked into shape by his wife, Rati, may need some clarification before we leave this verse. Beauty in its four dimensional fullness is the result of the meeting of two sets of light, as revealed in modern laser ray technique. Holographs have to be resolved, or made clear, by one cross-polarized ray meeting another at a certain angle. Eros, by himself, is an incomplete beauty without the admiration of

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his wife from another position, cutting at correct angles from one of the peripheral rims of one of the cones placed base to base. Cross-polarized light interferences create visibly living color effects, as is familiar in modern crystallography. Spectral colors are revealed at the periphery, while magenta pervades the greater part of the remainder of the rim. Some structural explanations of this verse may be considered far-fetched, but our excuse for resorting to such descriptions is that we only intended to add some adequacy or validity to the otherwise "negatively unscientific" or mythological language used here. Our attempt, as we have stated, has been to substitute a more scientifically acceptable version for the mythological language. *Myths can verify mathematics and vice versa.*

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6

dhanuḥ pauṣpam maurvī madhukaramayī pañca viśikhā
vasantas sāmanto malayamārud āyodhanarathaḥ
tathāpy eka sarvam himagirisute kām api kṛpām
apāṅgāt te labdhvā jagad idam anaṅgo vijayate.

O Daughter of the snowy peak, just deriving from Your most compassionate glance
Whatever grace he could, with flowery bow, bumblebee bowstring,
Five-flowered dart and springtide for minister—
all these as one withal—
Mounting the chariot of the mountain breeze, the God of Love victoriously reigns.

This verse continues and carries over the basic ideas just examined in Verse 5 and adds a little more dynamism to the picture. The key to the understanding of this verse is in the principle of occasionalism, with which Eros would get a dignity out of all proportion to his importance in human life. All people do not fall in love at all times of the year. The component factors making up the totality implied in every absolute occasion in which they do, are enumerated and described realistically here, with some details. Let us examine them separately and together.

The primary requisite for Eros to reign supreme is stated in the first line as the glance, though only askance, of the Goddess. This kind of glance is very familiar in devotional Sanskrit literature where the votary, out of humility, does not dare to pray for a full frontal regard of kindness from the Goddess. Such a sympathetic side-glance, well known as *karuṇā-kaṭākṣa*, is all that a humble devotee can claim from an absolute Goddess. Though the glance is only partial in its nature, it is received with total gratitude on the side of the devotee. Thus what is lost on one side is compensated for on the other side. Siva's love of

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Viṣṇu in female form, mentioned in the previous verse, is a richer and more direct relationship than in the case of Eros and the Goddess in this verse. Eros thus has a lesser status than even a a demiurge or a divine presence. He tends to derive his dignity from the instinctive pole of the personality of the Goddess and, as such, is to be placed nearer to the elemental spirits, located at the pole of existence, ontologically rich, at the negative limit of the vertical axis. This is the reason why, as we shall see in later verses, the God of Love is depicted as having his proper place within the legs of the Goddess. Above the horizontal line, Eros is exposed to too much light and heat or electricity coming from the topmost limit of the vertical axis. In this bright world of high energy his head is said to catch fire and he is obliged to jump into the navel of the Goddess, represented as a lotus lake in the mid-region of her body. Such details will come under more specific reference in later verses.

The reference to a bowstring of bumblebees has its own structurally dynamic implications. Every flower of the *vasanta* season (spring-summer) carries a drop of honey at its core, and each drop of honey attracts a bee. Thus the basis of a dynamism such as what exists between a bow and its bowstring develops. A bee, very thirsty for the drop of honey from the flower, develops a kind of tension within its mind similar to the tension of a bowstring when drawn away from its bow. In this picture the bow and the arrowhead are made up of choice flowers. The season spreads over the surface of the earth horizontally and evenly. The same scene, when viewed three-dimensionally, gives us a cross-section which contains the bowstring of thirsty bees sitting in a line along the horizontal parameter, thirsty for the drops of honey in the flowers which make up the bow. Enjoyment and the enjoyer, represented by the honey and the corresponding thirsty bees, are thus structurally placed as counterparts.

The arrow shoots vertically through this two-sided total horizontalized situation. When the trajectory of the arrow is perfectly verticalized, it can hit Siva at the omega point, the apex of the upper cone. It is Pārvati that gives the perfect verticality to the arrow of the God of Love, who has to lie in wait for his propitious moment, based on the principle of occasionalism in the total absolutist context. The five flowers of the dart represent

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the five sense interests. When they strike the victim altogether at the given occasion when everything else is favorable, even an austere god like Siva is unable to escape their total effect. The fate of us human beings who are lesser than Siva could be thus left to the reader's imagination. The whispering breezes of springtide lend their support to endorse this power conferred on Eros by the occasion. The mountain breeze is also an important concommitant, finalizing the imperative character in the operation of such a successful functioning of the God of Love. It is in this sense that at a given moment alone, when the totality of favorable factors conspire together, that the God of Love can triumph. The integrative principle belongs both to the principles represented by Siva as well as by Sakti. Eros has necessarily to hide and operate from the negative side. This dynamism gains support from the relational structuralism and vice versa; both must be treated as belonging to an Occasionalism with a capital letter.

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7

kvaṇat kāñcīdāmā karikaḷabha kumbha stananatā
parikṣīṇā maddhye pariṇata śaraccandra vadanā
dhanur bāṇān pāśam sṛṇim api dadhānā karatalaiḥ
purastād āstām naḥ puramadhitur āho puruṣikā.

With waist-belt of jingle bells resounding, slightly bent
forward by breasts
Like frontal bulges of a calf elephant, slim of waist, with face
like autumnal full moon,
Hands holding aloft bow with arrow, noose and goad—
O let the proud counterpart of the City Burner, appear before us!

Verse 7 seems to imply a challenge by the author, and it is meant as a key to the structural dynamism applied to the content of the beauty, having both name and form, at the core of the otherwise empty notion of the Absolute. Its position toward the end of the first ten verses is evidently meant to indicate the covering of the preliminaries in respect of this work. It is an appeal that apostrophizes directly the personification of Absolute Beauty, who is the central figure for the whole of this work: "Let her appear before our eyes in as concrete and real a form as we could possibly expect".

Beauty has to be given some kind of visible form, either as a Lakṣhmi, or a Sarasvati, or even a Kāḷi, as conventionally known to the Indian mind, to confer on it a tangible meaning if at all. Such divinities have all to be fused together into one abstracted and generalized dynamic peronal expression in which all the levels and four-fold aspects implied in each of them could be brought into active interplay together under a universal concrete perspective. The three previous verses could be seen to have prepared the ground step by step for this verse. All the six previous ones are synthetically put together and summarily reviewed here to afford a firm basis for the further elaboration of the wisdom contained in the rest of the work. If we look at the

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eighth verse in advance, we can see here the emergence of a definite personality of the Goddess, seated on a couch and represented in a form suitable for the contemplative purposes of an actual yogi. Here, however, the author takes his stand on a more neutral ground between matter and mind.

Advaitic verity is neither real nor abstract, but is something that places itself at the core of consciousness; sometimes real, sometimes amorphous or abstract. The dancing Siva in his sinuous movement represents the pure verticalized process of the cosmic flux of becoming. He is the City-Burner who descends in all his burning glory into a situation, which is to be ontologically understood, at a lower level in the vertical axis. The last line of this verse makes direct reference to the Goddess, meant here to be a counterpart of the City-Burner as a dynamic version at an ontological level. Her dance is not usually that of a masculine *tāṇḍava*, but is filled with a grace natural to the feminine principle, slow and heavy, known as *lāsya*— a dance which has a more gentle horizontalized grace. Here, however, as she still remains the wife of the City-Burner, a certain degree of masculinity remains grafted on to her, to give a positive revaluation to her personality which is otherwise fully feminine. No contradiction is to be implied here. There are many such features that we have to put together in order to enter into the full spirit of this verse, which, as we have said, is both a key and a challange to us. Thousands of years of accepted Sanskrit as well as Tamil poetic conventions have been telescoped, as it were, into the four lines of this verse.

The paradox of the first verse is only heightened before being abolished at this stage of the work. The world of fine particles of the second verse is also to be presupposed here to get the neutral position to be revealed now in only a very thin outline. It is as if we see the television screen with streaks of silver light vaguely playing on it, instead of an actual bright, colorful scene. In between the over/under focussing, there is a neutral ground which is neither psychic nor physical. If it is visible at one moment, it is not visible at the next. The quaternion structure of the third verse is also to be retained here, as what is depicted is to be treated in its totality as representing the structural dynamism that the author has outlined upto this

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point. Besides the four-fold nature of the structural ground of the third verse, we have also to include that vertical dimension passing through the whole quaternion, by which cause is given primacy over effect. Finally, we have to insert the occasionalism implied in the fifth and sixth verses, by which divinities and demi-urges could equally attain absolutist status when coming within the purview or aegis of this normalized Goddess, who is neither meant to be too hypostatic nor too hierophantic. She stands on the terra firma, while Siva is the City-Burner placed high above. To get a vision of Absolute Beauty in female form in this thin and neutral light, as intended by the author in this verse, one has to place oneself in the same neutral subjective mood, so that the seer and the seen could experience the overwhelming upsurge of Absolute Beauty by the sudden cancellation of what the seer represents and what he sees in gleaming outline. When viewed in such a correct perspective, this verse gives up some of its enigmas, without which it may not make meaning at all, especially to a modern reader.

The first line refers to the sound of the jingling waistbelt bells as the starting point conducive to making the vision appear to the reader in just that form intended by the author. The vision has only a schematic status, although it is dynamically presented here. Sound belongs to the conceptual side, while the schematic outline is a form. Thus the dance meant to be revealed before our eyes is, in principle, the same as the well-known Nataraja dance, conceived in a more normalized form, at a lower level. The sound of the waistbelt bells is heightened when the dancing girl plants her feet as she enters the stage for her performance. By the sound of these bells, the onlookers are introduced at once into a world in which concepts and percepts cancel out into a sheer beauty expressed through the art of dancing. Touching terra firma first presents the ontological starting point of the dance, where sound meets form, and brings in the horizontality of the earth into the total schematic situation. This is known in Sanskrit as *jhaṅkāra* (sudden jingling of the ankle bells), the point where ontology has its impact and participation as between the earth and mind.

After marking thus the horizontal bottom limit in the very first line, the poet refers us to the heavy breast region, which is

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to be imagined as a horizontal line, schematically understood, on the numerator side of the situation. We also know at once that when it comes to the necessity of feeding a newborn baby, the breasts of a woman are better when they are big and ponderous, although the breasts of a young maid before her maturity need not have the same ponderousness as in later years of full maternity. These two versions are reciprocal. Time is telescoped here, and intervals tend to be abolished in terms of an eternal present or moment. That is why the author does not stop the dance movement at the transition point, in passing from the form of the Goddess where she is slightly bent forward to one in which her breasts are compared to the frontal knobs of an elephant. This last reference is to lift the a status of the breasts to a more hypostatic level of value context. There is a beautiful sinuous curve and a torsion as well as an inside-outside transposal to be imagined by us in this transition from numerator breasts to their own denominator aspect. This figure-of-eight, which results from contraction, transposal, torsion between right and left, and front and back— independent of big or small, near or far— can even be accentuated further. The dancing girl's beauty on the stage is meant to fill the whole field of vision summoned to our view here. Dancing consists mainly of bending and stretching, where the hips and breasts of a woman fuse themselves into a structural yin-yang model, both bright and dark at the same time. The dynamism is meant to be of increasing voltage until an absolute limit is reached, passing necessarily through the second and third- dimensional perspectives to the full stature of the fourth-dimensional version recognizable in the last line. In this last line the dancer and the Goddess attain to the maximum vertical height that it is possible to reach from the ontological side of the situation.

The *Daśakumāra carita* of Daṇḍin contains such a contemplative version of a dancing girl, in which she is first represented as beginning the dance by touching the ground with both her fingers. From this simple standpoint her performance becomes more and more elaborate, as the jingle bells help us to cancel the merely visual with the conceptual counterparts of the dance. Elaborations go on in endless variety and, as she is

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true to her name of Kandukāvati, it is a magenta ball representing *eros* that she plays with, dextrously manipulating it in great detail by bending and stretching with her beautiful torsion movements, so as to fill the whole stage or ground with her beauty. But the final feat of all is represented as one meant to make the ball go upward by hitting it with the back of her hands. The leap resembles that of Siva's *tāṇḍava*, and it is referred to by Daṇḍin as the "musical leap".

The dancing girl represents an ideogram which has been relied upon by a long line of master poets on the Indian soil to reveal the structure of the Absolute, long before Sankara himself adopted this method here. It could be called the Kandukavati ideogram, which has influenced erotic mystical literature throughout the centuries, down from Uma of the Upanishadic times to what is represented here, and which has been taken up and continued by Narayana Guru in his *Kāḷī Nāṭakam*.

When the tempo or voltage of this dance attains to higher levels of expression, we pass from a three-dimensional level to a fourth-dimensional one. Weak reactions in nuclear physics when influenced by a cyclotron similarly pass to a perspective that is more fully verticalized, just as a magnetism can do as it passes into electromagnetism. Thus the yin/yang structural pattern, with its vestige of duality between the two aspects, can progressively become abolished when electricity prevails more and more over the horizontal expression of weak magnetic fields. Both the frontal bulges of the calf elephant and the recumbent breasts could thus become absorbed into a central structural locus radiating light equally from all around the circumference. This is the full face of the Goddess, viewed in a verticalized perspective as a conical section. The limitation of paper and description would naturally make the tilting of the face of the Goddess from a vertical to a horizontal view negligible. This is why the mature autumnal moon-like visage of the Goddess is presented to the view of the onlooker without apology. The view thus obtained is a frontal one, resulting from the tilting of a conical section, which, if it needed explanation, would have unnecessarily landed us into the intricacies of three-dimensional conics and geometry, which is thus kept out by Sankara for good reasons. If one should look at a face reflected from the top of a wall, this circular conic section view would be justified.

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After getting so far in our vision of the content of the beauty of the Absolute in three-dimensional terms, the remaining task is for Sankara to make this vision fully fourth-dimensional, or even multi-dimensional, in its status. The fourth-dimensional status is revealed in the third line, where conventional monomarks of Indian iconography are attributed to the Goddess intended in this verse, conforming to the norms of a well-accepted iconographic language which has been developed through the ages and shaped finally by the successive contemplatives who revised and revalued the basic ideogram. The hands holding aloft bow and arrow, noose and goad, are meant to mark the horizontal and vertical structural dimensions of the Goddess, now viewed together in a fully fourth-dimensional perspective. The bow and arrow have the target of making Siva fall for her, but the goad and noose have between them a fully verticalized function of normalizing the movement of something of a dark and spatial or earthy order, like an elephant. They are thus the four regulative principles in the grand flux of becoming, to be imagined as taking place within the context of time and space in a fourth-dimensional universe.

Finally in the last line it is indicated that although she is a Goddess belonging to the so-called weaker sex, she is still capable of attaining high vertical heights in the same way as her husband by means of her direct affiliation to him. They have equality of status in every respect, as we shall see maintained throughout this work.

The question now remains whether the vision here presented is to be treated subjectively or to be taken as objectively positive. We shall see that upto the limit of Verse 41 inclusive, which is distinguished as *Ānanda Laharī* the descriptions of the Goddess apply to the inner space within the yogi as his own personal experience. Beyond the 41st verse, the title becomes *Saundarya Laharī*, where the presentiment is on the side of the non-Self rather than the Self. We should, therefore, after the schematized dynamism has been presented in this verse, expect to see verses clothed in more realistic terms, so that they are to be placed inside or outside. This can be noticed in the very next verse. The last line refers to the "proud counterpart of the City-Burner," where we have to suppose that sex limita-

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tions are abolished and cancelled out. Siva, as *Ardhanārīśvara*, is androgynous—a half female, half male deity. Conversely, Sakti is here the proud *puruṣikā*, where the word *puruṣa*, though normally applied to the male, is here applied to the female on the same reciprocal principle as above.

One more point remains, which is the reference to the slimness of the waist. In other Sanskrit poems of Kāḷidāsa and Sankara, we have this same feature more directly referred to as *mithyā-kalpita madhya*—as the middle region having a false conceptual status only. The Absolute Goddess is not to have any waist at all. It has to be abolished in the name of her schematic status, because here, schematically speaking, is implied the meeting point of the apexes of two triangles, one representing the hypostatic or metaphysical, and the other representing the heirophantic or the physical. Like the sand particles in the hourglass, the delicate passage or osmotic interchange of existence and essence that is taking place between the two is both nothing and something at the same time. This is a secret aspect of structuralism to which Kāḷidāsa and Sankara adhere throughout this and other works. Although abolished mathematically by its slim nothingness, we know that this waist region is the very part out of which everything is born. The paradox here is to be understood in its two rival structural reference points, one placed at the ontological end and the other at its opposite teleological limit. Ontologically, the double cones are to be placed base to base, while teleologically they are placed apex to apex. Both the positions are equally valid. It is the ineffable nothingness of the vertical axis, which passes from ontology to teleology without interruption, that represents the Absolute Value factor called "Beauty" here. When such a parameter is produced positively or negetively, upwards or downwards, we attain to the fourth-dimensional or even multi-dimensional value worlds within ourselves or in the cosmos outside of us. Cross sections taken at any point on this vertical parameter will reveal various *maṇḍalas* or *cakras*, which could be of infinite variety. Here we are more concerned with *cakras*, while in Tibetan Buddhism the four-sided *maṇḍala* language is favored and adopted. The very next verse gives us a picture of the Goddess seated within a structure which is suggestive both of a *maṇḍala* and a *cakra*.

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8

sudhā sindhor maddhye suraviṭapivāṭī parivṛte
maṇidvīpe nīpopavanavati cintāmaṇi gṛhe
śivākāre mañce paramaśiva paryaṅkanilayām
bhajanti tvâm dhanyāḥ kati ca na cidānarda laharīm.

Seated on a couch of Siva-form, having the Supreme Siva for cushion,
Placed within a mansion, wafted round by the perfume of blossoms of heavenly trees,
Located within a celestial grove on a pearly-gem-island in the midst of a nectar ocean—
Some fortunate ones contemplate You as the upsurging billow of mental joy.

It is natural for wisdom seekers to aspire for a quiet place, far from the ignoble strife of common human life. This desire only means that they want to keep company with themselves, seeking a happiness that is more than the pleasure that could be derived from society. In aspiring thus for loneliness, some aspirants might think of a cave in the Himalayas, as Siva is intent on finding in Verse 78. Others think of an island situated far away from disturbing contacts. We have had already a hint about this kind of natural aspiration in the third verse, where a city of light placed in mid-ocean corresponds to the dear dream of an ignorant man who strongly feels that he needs the consolation of wisdom or philosophy. This same idea is carried over for elaborotion in this verse where the third line alludes to a "pearly-gem island in the midst of a nectar ocean". It describes in greater detail a *maṇḍala*-like structure in which the Goddess is seated in dignity and grandeur on a couch. The island evidently has a well-furnished and well-ordered household in a mansion, surrounded by many varieties of trees laden with fragrant blossoms and ripe fruits. The grove itself is a holy place. The water of the ocean is not the usual salt water, but consists

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of rich life-giving nectar in great abundance. Poverty or indigence cannot touch such a place.

There are three familiar words in the context of *yantra*, *mantra* and *tantra*, which are *maṇḍala*, *cakra* and *ādhāra*. In Tibetan *maṇḍalas* we find the four walls or steps leading to four doors. A *cakra* would rather suggest a space enclosed by concentric circles, some more peripheral than others and generally three in number. The term *ādhāra* is more specifically used in yogic literature proper. There are six of them excluding the *kuḷakuṇḍa* and *sahasrāra*, which bring up the lower and upper limits. We can see, by glancing at the succeeding verses, that this verse prepares the ground for viewing these contemplative units within the consciousness as they could vary vertically or horizontally in a series, or in a hierarchy of sets or subsets. We shall have occasion to go into such details when we come to the verses treating of them.

For the present, we must note here that it is the state of mind within the consciousness of a yogi, who is meditating with shut eyes, which is the subject here. This island thus represents rather a state of mind than a bit of geographical land. India itself is sometimes referred to as *Jambudvīpa* (an island of blackberries) for contemplative reasons, outside of mere geographical considerations. The yogi thus meditating on the personification of Beauty within the scope of his own wisdom awareness, finds the most precious personification of Absolute Beauty in the first instance as seated comfortably on a couch. She is far removed from indigence or want. A yogi who feels that he is poor cannot meditate freely on the highest of values beyond all riches, which is represented by Absolute Wisdom. It is for this reason that the seat of the Goddess here is at the very core of a situation in which all sense of necessity of everyday life is excluded from its realm. There is a level on the negative side of the lower cone where necessity can have its place, but the island here is to be imagined as occupying the position just between the bases of the two cones, placed slightly apart in close juxtaposition.

The walls of the mansion could be considered a square or four-sided orthogonal figure, but the island itself should preferably be imagined as circle, because contemplation within

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consciousness is comparable to a torch in misty darkness, which clarifies only a globe of light around it. A burning lamp sheds its umbra and penumbra in circles. In spite of this circular (or rather global) shape in consciousness, when we think of the neutral level at which the mansion here is to be located, a square motif is not to be ruled out, because the world here is one that is viewed through lattices or matrices, as in a graph paper. Television technique and cybernetic matrices, as also gratings, microscopically studied, reveal the square shape based on the principle of orthogonality. The impossibility of "squaring a circle" in mathematics also indicates that the square fits into an actual context of full horizontality, while the circle is more contemplative. Reference to actuality of this kind brings the status of the Goddess into a fully realistic perspective. Vedanta, as some people wrongly think, is not a form of idealism. The soul of man is supposed to fit, by both its existence and its essence, to the very tip of the hard nail, just as a razor fits tightly in its own leather case. The idea of the universal concrete is to be respected to its very limit, as when the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* says that the nail scissors are made of steel without gradation in the homogeneity of its substance. Just as the steel fills completely the shape of the nail scissors, so *brahman* fills the whole universe. Nothing should be explained away as being not real or merely mental. Thus a square mansion placed within a circular island is not repugnant to the ideal doctrine of Advaita Vedanta, as understood through Sankara's commentaries. The numerous criticisms of Sankara's Advaita as tending to treat the world as unreal, are seen to be false when correctly understood in this way.

There is one special particularity in this verse which has to be examined more closely. The very first line seems to suggest that Siva became a couch and that a superior grade of the same Siva became a cushion for his wife to sit on. This offers a puzzle and an enigma which has to be explained before we proceed. In the common prayer of Christianity, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," reference is made to two worlds placed at two limits of the same vertical parameter. Heaven is hypostatic, while the earth is its hierophantic counterpart. What is there as a value is also here as a value, but there lurks within these two sets of values a

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subtle inversion which makes the one-to-one correspondence "topsy-turvy." Ancient Hermetic symbolism, as in the Tarot cards, alludes to this structural secret of "topsy-turvydom" by the picture of a man hanging head downwards. There is an inversion involved in the very structure of space, which is referred to as "mirror reflection" horizontally, and "handedness" vertically. These are two kinds of symmetries that have been noted by physicists within the basic structure of space. Ontological existence and teleological subsistence have to belong together within the total scope of absolute Space. Here a subtle ambivalence, a reciprocity, a compensation and a complementarity become evident. Existence and essence belong to two dichotomous poles of the total situation. Phenomenologists of modern times distinguish between *noetic* and *noematic eidetic* presentiments. What they call the phenomenological *epoche* or *ghost* is to be contained within brackets, so as to enclose the value content within the inverted curves of the two brackets, which, facing opposite ways, are turned obversely and conversely. A blind man might take a water jug and, holding it upside down, say that it is useless because it has a hole at the bottom. He might then touch the bottom and say that nothing can be poured into it. Though the Absolute has to be contained as a value within consciousness, it has to avoid falling into the double errors of tautology and contradiction. This epistemological requirement is referred to as impossibility *(asaṁbhava)* and tautology *(ātmāśraya)*. (See Narayana Guru's *Darśana Māla*, Chapter 2, Verse 6.)

The difference between existence and essence, which has been the subject matter of much disputation between modern existentialists and the earlier scholastic philosophers who emphasized essence, is a problem that has been faced and solved by Vedantic tradition long ago. When Vedanta refers to *sat-cit-ānanda*, the first term, *sat*, refers to existence or ontological reality, while the term *ānanda* corresponds to the essence of God as known in Western theology. It is between these two limits that logic, *cit*, rules supreme. In scrutinizing the meaning of *satyam jñānam anantam brahma*, Sankara takes much trouble in his commentary to point out that *sat* is neutralized by *cit* in its meaning content, and *cit* is again modified by *ānanda* in its

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meaning content. Thus between *sat-cit-ānanda* there is what Bergson would call a "back-back correction, which we must apply to the situation. According to this correction, Bergson would even go so far as to say that accidents don't happen to us, but that "we happen to accidents." If this idea can be understood, the enigma here of Siva becoming a cushion would be considered as quite in keeping with the views of such a modern pragmatist philosopher as Henri Bergson.

The hypostatic value of Siva, when transformed to the denominator side would become a couch or a cushion. What is there is also here in a transformed or translated form, one as teleological essence and the other as ontological existence. As we have indicated already, Siva comes down from the peak called Kailāsa looking for caverns for his austerities. He descends from the top of the structure to the middle of the parameter. The Goddess, on the other hand, has her reference at the bottom of the negative parameter. She ascends to the structural mid-region, and thus goes beyond all necessities into the neutral ground between the base sections of the two cones, where the palace on a gem-set island in a nectar ocean is to be placed contemplatively by the votary. If this verse is read with this kind of double perspective in one's mind, most of the enigmas become self-explained. The fortunate contemplative of the last line gives to us a standpoint with which we are to place the Absolute Goddess of Beauty at the *bindusthāna* or core of the contemplative situation to serve the purpose of fruitful yogic meditation. Siva has only a conceptual status; it is his name that is more important than his form. Transposed to the negative side, he becomes a value that helps contemplative verticality to be promoted within the consciousness. A couch and a cushion are objects which have their everyday value, which should not be excluded from the contemplative set of values.

The fragrant blossoms of special sacred trees and the sanctity of the grove itself, referred to in the second and third lines, could be fitted easily into the structural context at the mid-region when we remember that they belong to the world of intentionality and not actuality. Cleanliness and godliness are sometimes used interchangeably. The sweet smell of flowers and a grove of trees are presences or influences which give to life an interest

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and a zest, lifting it or merging it within higher or lower stratifications of the total setup of values. The peripheral trees forming a circle are more existential than essential, while the central trees, with the perfume of blossoms wafted by the breeze, mark an essential hypostatic level. While heavenly trees are referred to in the context of perfumed blossoms, gems are mentioned in the lower stratification. Their values are to be treated as interchangeable, whether they are placed hypostatically or hierophantically. When cancelled out vertically, they give homogeneity to Absolute Value, in which gem beauty and flower perfumes enter as equal partners, to cause the upsurging billow of mental joy referred to in the last line.

When *śivākāre mañce* is taken to mean that the gods become the legs of the couch of the Devi, there is evidently a challenge staring us in the face. The pictorial representations by Moghul and Rajput schools of painting, printed in the edition of Professor Brown of Harvard, do recognize that the transformation of the gods into the legs of a cot is meant seriously by Sankara, but to this day no justification of such a transformation has been suggested, at least to the knowledge of the author, by the commetators of this work. We believe, therefore, that only through a protolinguistic structural approach could such a transformation be even barely understood. A similar image of the gods becoming the legs of throne of Prajāpati can be found in the *Atharva Veda*.

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9

mahīm mūlādhāre kam api maṇipūre hutavaham
sthitam svādhiṣṭhāne hṛdi marutam ākāśam upari
mano'pi bhrūmaddhye sakalam api bhitvā kulapatham
sahasrāre padme saha rahasi patyā viharase.

The earth placed in the *mūlādhāra*, water in the *maṇipūra*
Fire in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*, air in the heart, with space above,
And amid eyebrows placing the mind . . . . breaking through
the whole *kuḷa* path,
You do sport with your Lord secretly in the thousand-
petaled lotus.

After placing the absolute principle of Beauty, presented in the most realistic, universal and concrete form, in her proper position at the core of the total structural setup in the eighth verse, this verse carries over the same into the other grades of stable positions on the vertical parameter, where a natural equilibrium of psycho-physical forces could be expected. As we have pointed out with reference to the classical dancing girl Kandukavati, who begins at the proper ontological starting point by respectfully touching the firm earth before elaborating the graded varieties of her art at more and more perfected levels, which fill the whole field or ground with magenta glory, here also the most stable ground for an equilibrium to be established between psycho-physical forces, introspectively or intuitively understood, is the earth principle, which is the rich ontological basis where the consciousness of the contemplative can naturally find repose and be at ease.

In contemplative literature we know of various grades of value systems, some of which are of "earth earthy," while others are placed in essences at higher hypostatic levels. The *Purāṇas* (traditional heroic or epic lore), which are meant for their popular philosophical appeal in the generality of contemplatives, speak of "twice-seven worlds" of such values, totalling

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fourteen, seven being above while seven are below. Names are given to each of these value worlds. When we include the subjective self or the objective self as an additional point of psycho-physical equilibrium, we get eight worlds which are subjective and eight worlds that belong to the non-self side. The Bhagavad Gita marks out eight possible stratifications in Absolute Consciousness in Verse 4, Chapter VII. Buddhism knows of the noble eight-fold path, and the Patanjali system of Yoga has its *aṣṭāngas* (eight grades or divisions). In the opening verse of *Śākuntaḷa*, Kāḷidāsa gives importance to this way of dividing the whole of the range covered by the vertical parameter by marking eight points, one set of which is in the descending scale and the other in the ascending, which latter alone figures in the opening verse; the subjective series is omitted evidently for the reason that the onlookers of the play bring to bear on the total situation by themselves the subjective side, while the players themselves represent the objective side. The joy of the play results by the interplay of the subjective and objective sides. There is also in the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* a reference to this graded unit consisting of eight items, there called *puryaṣṭakam* (eight cities) which make up the eight levels describing the subtle body, referred to there as the *sūkṣma śarīra*. The number eight thus seems to be a normal figure when the whole range of literature is considered, but in this verse there is only reference to six positions.

Sankara, in his *bhāṣyas*, comes up against this kind of difference between text and text, and votes there in favor of a bigger number, saying that having some extras is always safer than being strictly limited, as in the number of players, for example, in a game. In his *Aṛivu*, Narayana Guru analyzes this same question and comes to a fairly conclusive version of the epistemological problem involved. Knowledge is either of things present to the senses or of elements experienced from inside oneself, and these two aspects could be broadly divided by putting a horizontal line between the Self and the non-Self, that is, between the knower and what is known. We can go upward in an ascending scale of stable positions, rising gradually into the region of the non-Self, or sink introspectively to the source within, starting with the most stable ontological pole marked by the firm earth. The question of inserting your own Self

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(ātman) as the eighth item on the objective side, to complete the series of eight could be done last of all (in the manner of 7+1, 5+3, or 6+2).

We are concerned with explaining the problem of only six positions being discussed in the present verse. We could easily add one more below the *mūlādhāra*, which would mark the position of the *kuḷakuṇḍa* of Verse 10, and in this verse itself there is the *sahasrāra* (the thousand-petaled lotus), which does not seem to be included in the six. Thus the puzzle is cleared without us having to suggest some modification of what is stated in this work in very clear terms as the six *ādhāras* (stable positions). We enumerate them in an ascending series given in this verse:

1. *mūlādhāra*
2. *maṇipūra*
3. *svādhiṣṭhāna*
4. the heart *(anāhata :* not named here)
5. the space above *(viśuddhi :* not named here)
6. the mind between the eyebrows *(ājña :* not named here)

In the Patanjali system, which is based on the dualistic Samkhya philosophy, the dynamism of yoga is in terms of a gradual process of spiritual progress, in eight grades of discipline, ascending to what is marked by the word *kaivalya* (aloneness) at the culminating point. This kind of gradual process of spiritual progress between two points, representing ends and means, is repugnant to the more dynamic unitive view proper to Advaita Vedanta, where no vestige of duality could be tolerated, whether in ends or in means. Ends and means have to be treated together. This is the correct Advaitic approach of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita.

The "*kuḷa* path" here is a reference to those who follow the Śakti cult, whether known as Kauḷins or Samayins, the latter being considered more respectable than the former. We have explained the difference in our general remarks elsewhere. The words "breaking through the whole *kuḷa* path imply the revaluation of those two kinds of esotericism in terms of the more radical or absolutist approach denoting this work. The dynamism of this verse is complemented and completed in the next verse as both an ascent as well as descent.

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There is a reference to a snake that sleeps in the hollow of the lower limit called *kuḷakuṇḍa*. This is the much talked about *kuṇḍalinī* snake. *Kuṇḍala* means a hoop or a ring. It is thus sometimes thought of as a circle enclosing an absolute Value ideogram. An improved version of it is when we think of it coiled up like a viper, rather than a cobra, appearing like a spring of three and a half coils, as specifically indicated in the next verse. This snake is not only sleeping in its most easy-going state, but can uncoil itself with a hissing noise, as mentioned in some yogic texts, to become a verticalized and rigid version of the same without coils. By this verticalizing ascent, another hole at the top of the psycho-physical setup is reached, passing through, if possible, what is referred to as an absolute passage situated somewhere below the pituitary gland at the soft palate behind the uvula. When the head of the snake touches this highest of plexes or points of psycho-physical synergism or syndrome, the yogi is supposed to experience an exaltation that makes him, in principle, attain the Absolute Vision. These upper and lower limits have to be clearly visualized by us in following the Verses 9 and 10. Here we are only explaining how "breaking through the whole *kuḷa* path" is a dynamism to be understood as resembling the sudden increase of electric voltage rather than any slow process.

The references to sporting secretly only means that the yogi's whole dynamism has a public and a private reciprocity in terms of enjoyment. What is private to the minus side is public on the plus side, and vice versa. The secret alluded to here is to be understoood as having a reference to the minus side.

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10

sudhādhārāsārais caraṇa yugaḷāntar vigalitaiḥ
prapañcam siñcanti punar api rasāmnāya mahasaḥ
avāpya svām bhūmim bhujaganibham addhyuṣṭa valayam
svam ātmānam kṛtvā svapiṣi kulakuṇḍe kuhariṇī.

With streaks of ambrosial essence streaming from between
your feet,
And again sprinkling blessings over the worlds from that
point of high intelligible values;
Attaining your proper ground by returning to a snake-form
of three coils and a half,
You sleep in the hollow of the *kuḷakuṇḍa.*

We find, by visualizing this work as a whole, that it is tacitly divided into sections of ten, though not strictly in every case. Thus, we can expect this tenth verse to sum up a preliminary in which all matters of importance are introduced to the reader. They are: the world of paradoxes, the world of particles, the quaternion, the primacy of ontology, the borrowed glory of demiurges, occasionalism, the total structural dynamism, the principle of vertical inversion, and the six stable positions *(ādhāras).* These concepts have all been brought to light to facilitate the understanding of the later verses before passing on to the *srī cakra* and its details in the next verse.

Yoga literature is familiar with what is called a *kuṇḍalinī* snake. It is said to be coiled and normally in a dormant, hibernating or sleeping state. By willful disciplines, such as Haṭha Yoga, yogis are supposed to rouse this sleeping snake which is said to be present within the hollow of consciousness, having its reference at the base of the vertical axis. When thus aroused it unfolds its coils and raises itself like a spiral spring, reaching higher and higher levels of consciousness, passing through the various *cakras* where syndromes or synergisms, whether psychologically or physiologically understood, are to be schematically

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marked out by the yogi for his guidance in meditation. We are familiar also in Yogic literature with the three *nāḍis:* the *iḍa* (left or moon nerve), *piṅgala* (right or sun nerve) and the *suṣumna* (central nerve). The *suṣumna* marks the central line of nervous facilitation through which the *śakti* or the power called the *kuṇḍalinī* rises upward to transcend the various levels of consciousness. This parameter or line of nervous facilitation is supposed to be a capillary as thin as one-thousandth of the breadth of a hair which conducts *ūrdhva retas* (the ascending vital energy), which, passing through other intermediate plexuses, ganglia or synapses—representing various syndromes and synergisms constituting a hierarchy in the nervous system—finally attains the highest position in the center of the thousand-petaled lotus. The snake is represented conventionally as passing from the left *(iḍa)* to the right *(piṅgala)* of the central *nāḍi (suṣumna)*, the three strands of which, when taken together, perhaps correspond to the sympathetic nervous system where the main influx of vital energy is said to ascend by an innate principle of facilitation. Various attempts have been made by physiologists as well as psycho-physically minded experts, as also those who speak in psychosomatic terms, to establish a correct correspondence between this ancient *haṭha* yogic vision of the ascent of psychic energy and the final attainment of the proper purpose of Yoga. All such attempts have been only partial examinations. This is due to the fact that various degrees of abstraction between mind and body factors are possible. It is the philosophy, which accepts dualistic or non-dualistic positions, that determines whether the picture of such a snake presented is to be taken seriously or only figuratively.

One sees sometimes in some conventional pictures of this snake that it passes from the right to the left of the central thin and mathematical parameter. Dualistic schools of Yoga, such as that of Patanjali, give more importance to the ascent than to the descent of the *kuṇḍalinī* snake. At the final point of the ascent is the *sahasrāra padma.* In other texts, that final point is sometimes called the *brahma randhra,* an absolutist passage through which the consciousness can rise to higher levels than can be envisaged by dualistic thought. The methodology and epistemology of Advaita Vedanta requires that the whole question of the *kuṇḍalinī*

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snake be viewed from both its positive and negative perspectives, that is, both as ascending beyond the *brahma randhra* and as descending to sleep again in the cavity at the negative ontological limit of the total psycho-physical setup, within the four limits of which all states of consciousness must necessarily live, move and have their being.

It would not be wrong for us, in the light of these remarks, to attribute to Sankara the intention of presenting here a revised and revalued version of the dynamism of psycho-physical states, in which the double movement of the *kuṇḍalinī* snake is presented with its beauty and symmetry as in keeping with his own Advaita Vedanta, rather than according to the philosophy of Patanjali or others vitiated by various degrees of implied dualism.

We have to begin by placing the feet of the Goddess at the alpha point or negative limit of the vertical parameter. Between the feet at the center, viewed from a vertical perspective, the description here is justified, that some ambrosial essences have their origin at that locus marked by the zero point.

The reference to the blessing of the world by sprinkling ambrosia on all the levels within the limits of the body of the Goddess necessarily presupposes an upward as well as a downward movement from this point of origin. Thus there are ramified sets of values that resemble the tree of Porphyry of Western theology, as also an inverted version of the same which could be a reflection of the former. The movement of the *kuṇḍalinī* snake and the levels, both positive and negative that it can attain, thus come to have both a vertical and a horizontal parity or symmetry. The quite and dormant snake marks the lower limiting point in consciousness when the yogi does not exercise any pressure of psycho-physical discipline on himself. When he does exercise such a pressure by what is generally called *tapas* (mystical agony), this hissing snake passing spirally aronnd the central parameter not only attains higher levels by what is marked as the zero point, but touches higher and higher worlds in the domain of the intelligibles. Though all these details are not specifically indicated in the verse itself, we are sufficiently justified in elaborating the purport of this verse in this manner because Sankara does the same in other verses, telescoping into unity many factors which could be elaborated endlessly through

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didactic verbosity. He is using a non-verbose and necessarily cryptic medium here, which has many aspects to be supplied by the imagination of the reader himself.

The higher levels of the intelligibles attained by the *kuṇḍalinī* snake in its ascent refers to conceptual values, as implied in the phrase *rasāmnāya*, which refers to the essence or joy or value described in the scriptures such as Upanishads. The term *mahas* (meaning greatness or glory) justifies our position that it is the joy or bliss in experiencing the meaning of the Absolute which is to be kept in mind here. This glory of the Absolute marks the topmost limit in this spiritual ascent, of which the bottom-most limit is known as the *kuḷakuṇḍa* or the *kuṇḍalinī* which is an inside or hollow rather than an outside. What is lost by the author's avoidance of verbosity has to be supplied by the imagination of the reader so that this preliminary section of ten verses could effectively round off matters of interest for the student to proceed more normally with his studies beyond this first section.

The reference to three and a half coils of the snake would remind us of a viper rather than a cobra. A viper has a way of coiling in half circles and placing its head at the point where the three and a half coils can be imagined to terminate. Twice three and a half makes seven; thus, we cover all the psycho-physical centers in an extended sense when we include factors such as *ahaṅkāra* as we see in the Gita's enumeration of the hierarchy of factors. If we include the *brahma randhra* and the *kuḷakuṇḍa*, we could add two more stable positions. If we should add one on the positive side, or the ascent, it would be fair to omit the one on the negative side, or the descent. The "half" in the "three and a half" is supposed to indicate this alternative inclusion or exclusion of limits understood dynamically rather than statically. The Yoga Upanishads actually speak of ten *ādhāras* or *cakras*, six of them real in the cosmological sense while the others could be psychological or theoretical in their status. Sankara elsewhere dismisses such discussions about the actual number, saying that he is unable to settle the difference between text and text, but would prefer a large number so that nothing, subtle or gross, stands the danger of being overlooked. As in a cricket game, it is always better for a team to have a few extra players along.

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11

caturbhiḥ śrīkaṇṭhaiś śivayuvatibhiḥ pañcabhir api
prabhinnābhiḥ śambhor navabhir api mūlaprakṛtibhiḥ
catuś catvārimśad vasudalakalāśra trivalaya-
trirekhābhis sārdham tava caraṇakoṇāḥ pariṇatāḥ.

Four of Siva, five of Siva-maids distinct from those of Siva,
These nine of prime nature, also eight and sixteen petals,
Three circles and three lines—this completes
The forty-three elements which make up your finalized
angular refuge.

This verse refers to the well known *srī cakra*. *Cakra* suggests a global unit of consciousness. It is represented as a circle for two-dimensional convenience, but it is meant to be more than a circle. It consists of triangles with their bases placed conversely trying to interpenetrate each other from opposite sides. On the plus side, the numerator set of inverted triangles represents the masculine principle of Siva. The lower set of upright triangles, on the denominator side, evidently represents the feminine counterpart of each of the numerator set. A rectangle can be imagined by us to join the apexes of the base angles of the two reciprocal sets of triangles. A circle can be considered as the limit of a polygon of infinite sides; similarly, at the opposite limit, a triangle would be the most elementary polygon. A series of alternating odd and even numbers could be so arranged with four first digits on the first line, one less (i. e., three) on the next, and so on, until we form with these numbers a triangle; thus, polygons and numbers have between them a relationship. If we should consider a polygon with an infinite number of sides as a fully matured form of consciousness, all the other elements, starting from a triangle, could be united as inclusively contained within the two limits of a triangle and a circle. In the fourth line of this verse, the "finalized angular refuge" suggests the same maturity of finalization that is found in Verse 7 as the autumnal full moon face. Between the triangle and the circle,

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the lower and the upper limits respectively, could be recognized, and thereafter the three circles could be treated as three grades of further maturation and abstraction.

The Pythagoreans worshiped *tetractys*, which is a triangle, numerologically understood. The polygon of infinite sides becomes a circle by maturation of the triangle. The triangles are seen to have their apexes on a vertical parameter or axis, some of them in ascending and some in descending order. We can count four of such apexes from the top as we descend along the vertical axis; similarly, we can count five apexes in ascending order. When translated into three-dimensional or four-dimensional space, as in conics and solid geometry, we can see somehow the forty-three elements under reference here. Hilbertian mathematics speaks in terms of *chose mathematique* (mathematical things), which are treated as elements or units, by which the structure of mathematics as a whole is revealed. Within the scope of an endless series of numbers, it is possible to arrange them so as to get all the polygons possible in geometric figures. Adding together the four of Siva and five of Siva-maids gives us nine apexes which touch the vertical axis. These nine are referred to as of the "order of prime nature. "Nature *(prakṛti)* is the negative counterpart of the Spirit (*puruṣa*) of Samkhya philosophy, although Advaita Vedanta is against the dualistic treatment of Nature and Spirit as rival absolutes. Here, for the purposes of distinguishing the function of Sakti from that of Siva, for the sake of argument at least, the notion of a *mūlaprakṛti* is retained. This is to be treated not as a doctrinal, but as an epistemological and methodological necessity. Thus we have found some *raison d'etre* for the apexes and the triangles in the verse.

The base angles, in turn touched by a circumscribing circle there, are to be treated as petals in a flower, or radiation lines of the points of a compass. This circle could be divided into eight divisions of forty-five degrees each. We could further subdivide it into sixteen, because space could be four-dimensional or multi-dimensional according to the fraction of the right angle that we treat as a unit. If the circle is treated as a cross-section of space, and if we treat the inner circle and the outermost circle as the limits of what is conceptual and what is perceptual within consciousness, and if we put an intermediate circle which

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participates on both sides, we can roughly see the significance of the three concentric circles. The outermost circle represents the limit of the horizontal maturation of this geometrical figure, which combines a horizontal as well as a vertical gradation of elements. If we should now make due allowance for the simplification of this structure attempted here, so as to represent two-dimensionally what is really intended to be multi-dimensional then the maturation in the form of the outermost circle would mark its limit. Since the two orthogonal axes within the circle are equalized, it would mean that there is a harmony between the two tendencies of horizontalization and verticalization, within which Absolute Consciousness with a negative perspective can be said to operate. Vertically viewed, however, we have four against five "of prime nature" where the parity is lost and a handedness seems to prevail instead.

Such are some of the speculations on this verse describing the *srī cakra*, about which we could not claim dogmatically any mathematically valid adequacy. Like time and space articulated with each other, we have to imagine something like what Bergson has said, the relevant part of which we quote here:

> Across the time and space which we had always known to be separate and, for that very reason, structureless, we shall perceive, as through a transparency, an articulated space-time structure. The mathematical notation of these articulations, carried out upon the virtual and brought to its highest level of generality, will give us an unexpected grip on the real. We shall have a powerful means of investigation at hand, a principle of research, which, we can predict, will not henceforth be renounced by the mind of man, even if experiment should impose a new form upon the theory of relativity.[1]

This idea suggests that the Siva-maids being "distinct from those of Siva" is only to point out that they are positive and negative counterparts, not to be confused together. Prime nature, as in the octave, is composed of $3\frac{1}{2}+3\frac{1}{2}=7$ upwards or downwards. Since here the perspective is avowed from the negative side of the Goddess, rather than from the positive side

1. Henri Bergson, *Duration and Simultaneity*, Bobbs-Merrill; 1922; pp. 150.

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of the God, the five below and the four above can be justified. The finalization is both horizontal and vertical. A circle represents the harmonious integration of vitalistic and pure tendencies in the Beauty of the Absolute Goddess.

The eight and sixteen petals refer to points of the compass, as we have said. The three circles could be justified in the sense that for an island placed in an ocean there could be a protective rampart placed all round and a trench outside it, with the limit of the open sea touching the island peripherally. Such a picture is found in Kāḷidāsa's *Raghuvaṁśa*, Canto I, Verse 5, where the kings of the Raghu dynasty are said to rule over the earth which is bounded by the ocean. Another picture of such a cross-sectional view of consciousness by concentric circles is given in the *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*. In this analogy, we are looking down a well at an ascending well-bucket from which water is simultaneously descending through a hole in the bucket bottom.

The word "refuge" suggests that when the contemplative creates a direct bipolar relationship with this *srī cakra* it will make him think of all elements together at one and the same time. Such a complete meditation will be effective as a final refuge, both as a means as well as an end, in his spiritual progress.

There is a far cry between the form of final good or salvation understood in the prophetic religions prevailing in the West and this way of salvation implied in the meditation of the *srī cakra* representing the beauty of the Goddess. The gap between the two versions is a difficult one to bridge. While admitting this glaring incompatibility between the prophetic and the pagan ideas of salvation or liberation, it is possible, through a proper interpretation in the light of mathematical structuralism and more modern scientific notions of reality, truth or beauty treated together, to arrive at some way by which the gap could still be bridged. Our comments on individual verses will at least help to reconcile these two standpoints and bring them closer together by abolishing the element of contradiction between them.

To the modern mind, which has now become familiar with wireless, radio and television, by which families in our planet are put into direct electromagnetic relation with the outermost frontiers of our expanding universe, the task of schematically

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understanding those waves or pulsations, whether related to light or sound, cannot be considered too hard to imagine which thus tends to make the whole world into an intimate village. The latest satellite being sent to outer space even contains a gold-plated plaque on which there is, intended to be deciphered by some intelligent being, a kind of universal proto-language understood in this universal nowhere or elsewhere.

Maxwellian equations and Hertzian conciliations, which both belong to this electromagnetic universe, give us, in terms of absolute equations and vectors, what can be called the heart-beat of life itself. Both could be fitted into the schema here and unitively understood. Textbooks of physics already contain such figurative representations of electromagnetic pulsation based on the sinus function, on which all energy transmission must depend, independent of distance. The magnetic field is always at right angle to the electrical current. This orthogonality gives us the basis of a quaternion structure, which a unit of harmonic motion would represent by crest as well as trough, both electrically and magnetically understood. Equations verify the geometrical figure and vice versa. It is the Pythagorean diagonal, based on logarithms, that is primarily involved here, in addition to the notion of processes in differential calculus, involving both parameters and asymptotic curves which verify equations. Also the machine language of cybernetics could help us to bridge the gap that seems to divide the two rival positions we have referred to above.

A further study of the relational content of the remaining verses would help the reader to arrive at what would at least be a greater degree of unitive understanding, which is the special contribution of the Advaita Vedanta of Sankara to world thought, whether physical or metaphysical, or both. An integrated view of physics and metaphysics would further justify the *srī cakra*.

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12

tvadīyam saundaryam tuhinagirikanye tulayitum
kavīndrāḥ kalpante katham api viriñciprabhṛtayaḥ
yad ālokaulsukyād amaralalanā yānti manasā
tapobhiḥ duṣprāpām api giriśa sāyujya padavīm.

O Daughter of the High Peak, to estimate the equal
of your beauty
The best among poets, exercising their fancy, somehow
created Brahma and others;
Eager to see your beauty, heavenly damsels fancy that they
attain to
The state of union with Siva, which is even hard for
ascetics to gain.

Verse 12 pertains to the subject of the participation of Siva with Sakti. It takes place at the crossing of the two orthogonal parameters. Above the horizontal parameter there is a conceptual form of beauty which requires the poetic gift of great poets to delineate in any appreciably tangible form. Unable to give a real content of theoretical beauty to this conceptual grade on the upper side of the horizontal axis, great Indian poets like Vyāsa, author of the Vedas, have filled this conceptual aspect of beauty with mythological characters, who have their source in their fecund imagination. They have no actuality, but shine by the reflected glory of the *cidābhāsa* (indirect conceptual light of reality).

Ontological richness, on the other hand, resides below the horizontal axis. That is the domain of Nature, represented by the Siva-maids of Verse 11 who feel at home there without any need for exercising austerities or suffering special agonies. Ontological beauty is doubly real, while teleological beauty is arrived at by double negation, by saying "not this, not this" *(neti neti)*. Teleological beauty is an effect, while ontological beauty is the source and the cause, and is nearer to the negative personality of the *śiva kumāris*. That is why it is said here, in the last line,

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that ascetics who go to the Himalayas and perform different austerities to gain a glimpse of the Absolute, especially of its positive glories, put themselves under much strain before being able to obtain even a minimum participation with what Siva represents as a counterpart in the total situation in which Siva and Sakti are equal partners. Heavenly damsels want to experience in themselves the upsurging bliss of Beauty. They are on the hypostatic side of the situation. The experience of Beauty takes place within the mind, because Beauty is a subtle value within consciousness. These heavenly damsels have only to enter sympathetically with their minds got into union with the negative vertical aspect of the Goddess of Beauty, to experience the ultimate bliss referred to here. This state of mind is natural and easy for them, while the male ascetics, on the other hand, cannot establish this participation as naturally and easily as the celestial maidens, for whom it is only a question of mental sympathetic adjustment with the Absolute Goddess. Both the ascetics and the hypostatic damsels are equally interested in experiencing the same Absolute Beauty, but the ascetics have the difficult task of filling the conceptual space with the help of poets or through austerities. The heavenly damsels need no ascetic practice nor poetic imagination if they only know properly how their mistress, the Devi herself, treats her husband as participating with herself, without duality. The two sides thus fuse into one, a comparably difficult task for the disgruntled and crude ascetics.

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13

naram varṣīyāmsam nayanavirasam narmasu jaḍam
tavāpāṅgāloke patitam anudhāvanti śataśaḥ
galad veṇībandhāḥ kucakalaśa visrasta sicayā
haṭhāt truṭyat kāñcyo vigalita dukūlā yuvatayaḥ.

Seeing a man overaged, uninteresting to view and
inert in sport,
Who has fallen within the range of your side glance,
Young women come running by the hundreds, with disheveled
hair, pot-shaped breasts revealed
By loosened upper garments, their waistbands bursting and
with their silk garments in disarray.

Love affairs can take place under mild circumstances or under the stress of high voltage. Erotic mysticism, as it is to be understood in the *Saundarya Laharī* is of the high voltage type, which is more conducive to revealing the underlying structure of the absolute ground on which the overwhelming dynamism of the principle of beauty must necessarily operate. In Verse 12, Siva-maids have an advantage over ascetics in the matter of gaining a first glimpse of that exalted value represented by the Goddess. Even an initial participation with what Siva represents in himself, as the highest of values, beyond all states of mind known to lesser artificial austerities or disciplines that the usual recluse might practice, is to be accomplished only through a life-time of step-by-step endeavor. In this verse, the dynamic content of erotic mysticism is further accentuated and brought into clear relief. One falls into love suddenly, and expressions like "love at first sight" reveal the unpremeditated and overwhelming nature of the event called "falling in love". The mechanism and dynamism involved in this lightning-like process is critically examined in this verse.

Any girl, when she is full of vitality at the proper age, could experience this sudden onslaught of love within herself,

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even in respect of a man who has no sex appeal in the ordinary sense. He could be overagad and not a sport at all. The absolute urge or pining for a counterpart, so that her own soul could fulfill itself vertically, at a given moment or occasion in life, is imperative in its demand for satisfaction. Heavenly damsels, like Urvaśi, Menaka and others in the Indra's world above, are known to have experienced this wonderful moment in themselves, in which they are suddenly plunged into a total state of abandon. All prudery, coquetry and allied sentiments are thrown to the winds at that moment. Such overwhelming infatuation is found in many romantic and even tragic works of literature, irrespective of the traditional or cultural background. An English novel is thoroughly enjoyed by an Indian student, because the appeal of love is appreciated universally and enjoyed in its minutest details. Nothing can be hidden. A student in love understands the state of mind of Marius waiting for Cosette in the Luxembourg Garden in Paris, in Hugo's *Les Miserables*. Instances can be multiplied, but what is relevant to this verse is that we must recognize two complementary sides of the total situation in which Absolute Eroticism operates. A well-groomed college student may not be attractive to the most intelligent of girls, while, on the other hand, she is intently watching the face of the grumpy, even ugly, absent-minded, overaged professor, who pays no attention to his appearance at all. A nearer example in India is the figure of Siva, who takes care to make himself most repulsive to all women by letting his uncombed hair become matted and by wearing live snakes on his body.

Kumārasaṁbhava portrays an incident in the love affair between Siva and Pārvati, wherein the God of Love is burnt to ashes in the presence of the elaborate Vedic worship that Pārvati is able to offer to Siva to propitiate him. It was a terrible negative response that she got, after which she had to be carried home by her father, who appeared as an elephant (representing space). This brute setback in her initial efforts to attain Siva does not stop her renewed efforts. She begins to perform different austerities in a Vedantic key, wearing bark garments instead of the silk shawls of rich elaborate Vedism. Siva not only becomes favorably disposed by the *tapas* and renunciation in her revised approach, he even takes the trouble to come down

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from his heights to speak to her personally, taking the disguise of a *deśika* who is a *sannyāsin*. Their conversation reveals that her aspiration is compatible with his own status as a complete absolutist personality. A cancellation between counterparts thus takes place, not in terms of mere dualistic ritualistic propitiation of a lukewarm reciprocity or complementarity between them. It takes place only when, searching for the total experience of beauty, under the full stress of the principle of Absolute Eroticism, subject and object are abolished, and fused into one overwhelming upsurge.

It is in such a perspective that we must examine the present verse. Instead of referring to the Siva-maid side, it is the numerator aspect, Siva himself, who is to be taken as the "man" who is overaged, uninteresting to the view and "inert in sport". The next verse gives us a more verticalized perspective, in which erotic mysticism could have a chance to operate within the span of the 365 days of the year, occurring as a sudden event taking place through the occasionalism of a particular situation. The young women here are not ordinary representatives of their kind. They are similar to the celestial damsels like Urvaśi, although the event here takes place on ordinary natural grounds, yet they are neither too earthly nor too celestial. On the numerator side we have an outwardly uninteresting man, and on the denominator side we have the damsels who, like Śakuntala, are ready to fall in love at the slightest stimulus.

The references to bursting waistband, total disarray and confusion, and especially the "pot-shaped breasts", which are meant to reveal youth at its peak moment of horizontal maturity, altogether make for the cancellability of the denominator value of the womanhood against its masculine counterpart, whose beauty is not overt, but innate. That this cancellation must take place under the aegis of the Absolute is insisted upon in the second line. To fall within the aegis of the Absolute, it is not necessary for a man to be fully favored by the Goddess of Beauty; it is enough that a side glance, like a secondary polarizing light beam, should fall upon him from a distance. The neurological law of "partial stimulus: total reaction" operate here. A side glance, like the moonlight falling equally on palace

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and forest as in Verse 57, is all that is required to give an absolutist touch to the personality of the uninteresting man here.

The reference to the women "running by the hundreds" is meant to heighten the aspect of total abandon, and shows that pluralism is permissible on the denominator side, as required by cancellation of the many against the one. The notion of the one cannot be complete without implying the many, because the one and the many are dialectical counterparts, as explained by Parmenides and Plato. According to correct epistemology, the Absolute, by its nature, requires that the many running girls cancel themselves out in respect of the one unique Absolute, represented by the numerator personality here.

We have to note the bursting of the waistbands. Absolutism involves a suddenness or surprise. One enters into its arena with a bang and a crash. Similar expressions are used, in other verses, such as "startled" eyes of deer (Verse 18), lightning-streak-body (Verse 21), and also the burst of jingling bells on the waistbelt seen in Verse 7. This bursting or suddenness is necessary to give the overall absolutist touch that lifts this kind of eroticism out of the context of the mundane and conventional love affairs of the ordinary world.

The pointed reference to "pot-shaped breasts" is to show that this rounded shape has a hypostatic origin. This is confirmed by other references, such as in Verse 7, where the frontal knobs of an elephant set the anterior model for the posterior ponderous breasts and in Verse 19, where the breasts are equated to the cosmological luminaries of sun and moon. Such are some of the implications of the erotic dynamism portrayed in this verse.

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14

kṣitau ṣaṭpañcāśad dvisamadhikapañcāśad udake
hutāṣe dvāṣaṣṭis catur adhikapañcāśad anile
divi dviḥ ṣaṭtrimśan manasi ca catuḥ ṣaṣṭir iti ye
mayūkhās teṣām apy upari tava pādāmbuja yugam.

Fifty-six for earth, for water fifty-two
Sixty-two for fire, for air fifty-four,
Seventy-two for ether, for mind sixty-four—
These are the rays; beyond them are your twin feet.

This verse marks a further degree in the abstraction and generalization required before placing oneself in the correct perspective, as it is to be understood in these verses. The overwhelming experience of erotic joy pictured in the previous verse refers to an event that could take place within the span of one day. But there are 364 other days in the year in which young men and women must live continuously, without having that very occasion repeated the same way each day. It is suggested here that one live through that period by verticalization and generalization, continuing to live 365 days of the year, but in a dispassionate manner, without looking forward to any overwhelming event that might tend to make any one day different from the rest of the 10,000 years within the context of which, as stated in the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayam, each human being is expected philosophically to place himself.

We found earlier, in Verse 9, that the 365 days of the year could be further subdivided in a vertical ascending series of units that could have reference both to the seasons and to the stable states of mind known to theoretical Yoga books. The five elemental principles of the mind, treated from the item most earthy to the item most subtle, ether *(ākāśa)*, have all to be transcended by a lightning-like meditative vision within the contemplative, so that the principle of Absolute Beauty may be realized. Here the feet loom into consciousness, not like a

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crystal or a flower, not even as a color solid with a vague dynamism inside; they are to be visualized at the numerator limit as sending out the rays *(mayūkhas)* directly referred to in the last line. The brilliance of a supernova might be comparable to this hypostatic point, placed beyond all secondary enjoyments derivable from the various seasons, whether rainy or with clear skies. We have to imagine here an hourglass-like crystal, which is at the same time effulgent like a star, marking the omega point of the situation. A logarithmic spiral line traverses the hourglass, beginning at its lower base. The 56, 52, 62, 54, 72 and 64 are the days of the year, treated as spiraling round the hourglass, ranging from the earthy to the ethereal limits. It is not within these limits that the feet of the Absolute Goddess are to be placed, but sufficiently above them so that they could have a status far removed from the contamination of relativistic or hedonistic considerations. Absolute Bliss is of an order independent of cheap pleasures, in which one might prefer one season to another or one stable state of meditation (*cakra*) to another. They are all to be inclusively transcended to attain the final bliss in the Absolute, which is to be conceived as removed "oceans apart" from lesser considerations of bliss.

There is to be noted a one-to-one correspondence between the numbers attributed to the states of mind and the elemental manifestations, understood in terms of mind, as a basic reference. The asymmetry and variation in the numbers here can be explained by such astronomical events as the precession of the equinoxes and the solstices, which are all to be understood as coming in a vertical line where light and darkness meet like the international date line, which is fully schematic in status. We can further note that water and air have the lowest number of days to exercise their influence on the mind. The 72 of ether and the 64 of the mind are longer than the 56 of the earth and 52 for water. These are asymmetrical factors to be attributed to ontological density or other astronomical reasons. The numerator side in light predominates over the denominator side in darkness. This represents, thus, a perspective which is more hypostatically tilted than that of the color solid, in which the cones are placed base-to-base at the bottom limit. These structural peculiarities have been discussed previously. We can attain Absolute Beauty

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by ascending, as here, by descent to the bottom limit, or by placing ourselves correctly at the structural center for purposes of normalization and renormalization from both limits. Living at the north pole has its advantages, as does living at the equator. Advantages can also be cancelled out so that one could freely choose to live where he likes. Preference for a particular climate seems to be an unnecessary pleasure that luxury lovers indulge in.

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śaraj jyotsnā śubhrām śaśiyuta jaṭājūṭa makuṭām
vara trāsatrāṇa sphaṭika ghaṭikā pustaka karām
sakṛn natvā na tvā katham iva satām sannidadhate
madhukṣīra drākṣā madhuri madhurīṇā phaṇitayaḥ.

Radiant with the sheen of clear autumnal moonbeams, diadem of matted hair
Adorned with crescent moon, hands giving refuge and boon,
Rosary made of crystal-clear beads and a book—how could anyone worshipping You but once
Not gain in words, somehow, the pleasing sweetness of honey, milk and grapes?

In this verse we are no longer concerned with the phenomenal aspects of beauty, as we ascend one step higher in the vertical direction. The value here is the gift of poetic expression, which is not to be understood in a religious sense, but in a wholly aesthetic context. One aspires to be a great poet so that he can hold up a mirror to life or to truth. Poetry has sometimes been defined as a critique of life. Social novels reflect the state of contemporary society and all that belongs to it, in the form of crisscross or rival interests, with heroes and heroines who have problems great and small. Romantic plays, however, like Victor Hugo's *Hernani*, rise higher in the scale where romance and tragedy blend their value systems together. In the plays of Sophocles and Euripides tragedy attains to further heights of the fearful and the pitiable. There is thus a difference of levels represented by the literary works of great poets.

The expert manipulation of phrases is the main task of an author. When word value takes the place of other values, such as the joy implied in the successive seasons as in the previous verse, we naturally come to the Goddess of word wisdom, like Santa Sophia of Constantinople, to whom a great domed church was once dedicated, although the votaries inside have been indifferently Christians or Muslims at different times. Word

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wisdom has its value and its consolation to cultured people. On the Indian soil, Sarasvati represents this value. In the *Śatapaṭha Brāhmaṇa*, she is represented as sending her arrows in two diametrically opposed directions: one upwards to nominalism through conceptualism, and the other downwards through earthy expressions to the very source of the word.

The third line describes such a Sarasvati with her familiar crystal rosary beads and book. When we look at the first line, though, we find a slight departure from the conventional Sarasvati, where Sankara applies a dialectical touch to her representation. The brightness of moonbeams still suggests a hypostatic region of highly intelligible values, but the reference to the "diadem of matted hair" serves as an anticlimax. The word-goddess is here deprived of her jewelled headdress, instead she is to have her glory expressed through the same matted hair of which her husband is so proud. This anticlimax introduced into the upper limit of the situation is intentionally meant to cancel out against the actual sweetness of "honey, milk and grapes" referred to in the last line. The matted hair represents renunciation and indifference to sense values, but at the opposite limit the taste of honey, milk and grapes are represented as containing within their existential enjoyability an essence which is meant to participate with the value represented by the same matted hair.

This third line also says that the austerity cannot go with love of grapes, except by people who can understand how to put them together as limiting instances of one and the same value parameter, from the highest to the most factual limit of ontologically significant values. The *lahari* of overwhelming beauty here resides within the mind of a poet who is able to see how the taste of grapes and the matted hair could belong together, when compressed within the one absolute notion of Beauty. Anyone could come to understand how such a cancellation of two aspects is possible for him in terms of spiritual progress forever. The result might be that he decides to be a poet rather than a religious magnate. This does not make any fundamental difference, because a *kavi* and a *manīṣin*, a spiritually perfected man, are both treated as equal partners in terms of their understanding of absolute values.

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In the second line, the crescent of Siva is also duplicated as the natural heritage of Pārvati although her glory has a negative reference. The ambivalence is transcended when existence and subsistence, or facts and truths, meet and cancel out into the significant value of Beauty, expressed through words here.

The "hands giving refuge and boon" have been described previously by the author in Verse 4. His justification for bringing them into the picture again here is, as we pointed out before, a methodological necessity and should not be mixed up with doctrinal conclusions. By the same token, we could now understand this compromise between the conventional Vedic Sarasvati and a fully ontologically biased Pārvati, on the grounds that her downright existential aspects, like the taste of honey, milk and grapes, are intended to be cancelled out against essential values of the higher level. That Pārvati consents to remove her crown and be satisfied with matted hair like her husband Siva is already a gesture that heightens her status in a fully Vedantically revised context of absolutism. In order to have a one to one correspondence with this heightened status implied at the higher limit, the poet takes care to balance it by such factual factors as the joy one gets from tasting honey, milk or grapes. Cancellation thus becomes mathematically adequate and justified. The resultant vision is meant for very highly evolved poets. Others may not get this vision so easily. Moreover, it should be noticed that the sweetness of honey, milk and grapes is to be enjoyed here through literature, and not as a preference of the palate merely. This puts the whole meaning into the core of word-wisdom, which has nothing to do with sense indulgence at all.

It is suggested here that the poetry excels when realistic aspects are correctly blended with word aspects, which are nominalistic only. A perfect sentence or paragraph must contain as many references to fact truths as to truths that are only imaginary. It is the one to one correspondence between these two bipolar aspects that makes literature pleasing in an absolute sense. This truth has been recognized by Shakespeare when he makes the acts and scenes of a play alternatively touch lighter and serious chords in the human heart. Indian jewellers know how to set rubies and diamonds side by side, pearls with coral

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stone or amber and crystal beads together so that the different qualities of jewels cancel out into a beautiful garland. A book is a natural ornament for Sarasvati, the Word-Goddess, while the thin crescent of Siva represents a pure mathematical function in the domain of reason. She also wishes to possess the same pure reasoning as her husband, represented by the crescent moon. The bright moonbeams of clear autumn nights figure in Sanskrit poetry as a favorite ideogram dear to Indian pandits.

The overwhelming Beauty in this verse is to be located in the reference to the "diadem of matted hair," which effects a complete cancellation of any negativity she might represent otherwise. Taken as a whole, this verse might be said to cover the same value ground as what is meant to be covered by the *logos* (the *verbum*, the word) in Western theology. The value ground of the word continues up through Verse 19.

It might further be suggested that there is a gentle touch of sarcasm that a keenly critical eye can discern in this verse. This sarcasm belongs to the same order as in the expression, "damning with faint praise". There are numerous places in the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads where veiled sarcasm and faint praise blend into something ineffable, beautiful, and harmless. Sankara is not unaware of this subtle literary device. When viewed in such a light, the praise of Sarasvati here could be still seen to fit correctly into the context of these verses. When we read, in the third line, that it is enough to worship such a Sarasvati *even once*, the ironical implications present here in a veiled manner would become recognizable and even appreciable.

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16

kavīndrāṇām cetaḥ kamalavana bālātaparucim
bhajante ye santaḥ katicid aruṇām eva bhavatīm
viriñcipreyasyās taruṇatara sṛṅgāra laharī-
gabhīrābhir vāgbhir vidadhati satām rañjanam amī.

The magenta light of dawn that caresses the lotus forest of the imagination of superior poets—
The saintly ones who can thus meditate on you as the beloved of Brahma,
Praising you as Aruṇa herself, by profound words
Expressing with dignity your erotic charm, bring delight to all good people.

Here in Verse 16 we have to imagine two sets of persons of perfected aesthetic taste: the creative artists on one side and those who can admire the artists' creation on the other. A good car is not compatible with a bumpy dirt road; nor can a beggar wear satin or silk without making himself ridiculous. Just so, the poet must have a reader sufficiently intelligent, or his high class writings will not have a market at all. This is why Kāḷidāsa and other great Sanskrit poets are now going into cold storage forever. In other words, the reader and composer belong together, in the same context of word wisdom; they are inseparable counterparts. This justifies the pointed reference to "superior poets" in the first line. The value called word-beauty applies equally to both of them. It is in the mind where the function of good poetry operates, whether by mind-expansion or by mind-contraction, as the case may be. If champagne contracts the mind, LSD expands it. Champagne makes you feel very comfortable but LSD can make you feel like lying on the ground on Mount Sinai and saying your prayers again and again.

Now whether expanding or contracting the mind, there is a neutral abstract point where these two opposite tendencies cancel out each other, according to the nondual approach of these verses. For the purpose of touching with one finger the

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point where this subtle but overwhelming beauty resides, the author asks you to think of a pond full of lotuses, with mixed short and tall stalks, to resemble a forest. If anyone has entered into a lotus pond and watched magenta lotuses just at the time when the pink light of dawn streams onto the face of each lotus, as the present writer has had occasion to do, he would experience a special overwhelming sense of beauty which does not come from the beauty of the lotus only, but is an emergent factor resulting from the lotus being kissed by the pink rays of the sun. By the blending of the two colors, each having its origin in opposite limbs of the parameter, the amplitude of Absolute Beauty can live and move with all its possible intrinsic variations.

We have referred to the magenta as the color of all colors. It is more than just one of the spectral octave which includes the seven chromatic colors. Magenta of visible light has in it the fusion of the infra-red and the ultra-violet. The magenta resulting from the meeting of sunlight and lotus is aptly called "Aruṇa herself" or "magenta itself" in the third line. *Aruṇa* is the Sanskrit word for "magenta", as well as a name of the Goddess. Although we tend to consider rainbow colors as transient and unreal, Henri Bergson says that unless somebody proves why a color is false, he would continue to treat it as real. Sankara here is also justified in calling Absolute Beauty "magenta itself." Viewed thus correctly, *sub specie aeternitatis*, i.e., "under the aegis of the Absolute," we neither have to add to nor subtract anything from the real Beauty status of this color. Beauty, not theology, is the central theme of the present work. The famous opening words of Keats' "Endymion" could be called on here to further support the treatment of Absolute Beauty for itself, by itself and through itself. We can attain it in many ways, and this is one of them. It is as justified as any other.

Two further points can be clarified in this verse which brings in the mythological relation of Sarasvati to Brahma. Sarasvati is sometimes referred to as the daughter of Brahma, although she is also seen sometimes as his wife. Whether as wife or daughter the affection is the same when translated into verticalized terms. In this sense, she is dear to the Creator as the source of all real values. Color is a real value, especially when given an absolute

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status, as with magenta, which participates both with the plus and the minus sides of the color solid, both vertically and horizontally. Sarasvati is a mythological personification of an Absolute Wisdom value factor. This has something directly to do with the profound words which express with dignity the exotic charm of the Goddess. No artist in Paris could be considered a great master if he has not proved his worth by correctly painting a nude. This shows that at the very core of art the Goddess of Beauty is to be visualized, not in vulgarized hobo-like terms of a pavement artist in Montmartre, but at least in terms of a Jocunda or Mona Lisa, so highly prized by dilettantes the world over. If love poetry is forbidden, Shakespeare and Kāḷidāsa would have to resign their jobs. The kind of eroticism described here, being a value which is the main article of trade for master poets anywhere and anytime, is of a noble rather than a vulgar order. That the biographies of many great men of the world show them to be great lovers only heightens their value as individuals without detracting anything from their greatness.

The noble quality of such an eroticism is indicated by the word *gabhīram*, which taken together with *śṛṅgāram*, denotes a very noble and dignified form of erotic mysticism, far beyond the usual vulgar eroticism.

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17

savitrībhir vācām śaśimaṇiśilābhaṅgarucibhir
vaśinyādyābhis tvām saha janani sañcintayati yaḥ
sa kartā kāvyānām bhavati mahatām bhaṅgirucibhir
vacobhir vāgdevī vadanakamalāmoda madhuraiḥ.

The shining ones, lustrous as a fragment of broken moonstone,
Who generate the power of articulation—those who can
contemplate you, along with these *vaśinis*, which have an
elusively fluid gleam,
Become, O Mother, the authors of great poetic words,
Adding sweet charm to the lotus face of the Goddess
of the Word.

In this verse we are again in the domain of semantics. In this branch of study Sankara shows himself, as in his other works, to be an expert rival to his Pūrva Mīmāmsā critics, the Mīmāmsakas who, as followers of the tradition of Jaimini, rather than that of Bādarāyaṇa, took an anterior position in respect of Vedanta. Modern authorities on semantics, like Bloomfield, Morris and Karnap, have many theories about how meanings emerge from words. The pragmatics and syntactics of language are the two other aspects of the study of meanings in relation to words. Some authorities, like Ogden, even think in terms of "the meaning of meanings." In the days of Sankara, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, Prabhakara and Vācaspati Miśra great semantic battles have been fought on the soil of scriptural exegesis, the rumblings of which are heard even to the present day in the domain of advanced panditry or pedantry.

Sankara is content to allude to only two aspects of semantics in this verse: the word-bearing elements of the first line are named *savitris*, as opposed to the *vaśinis* of the second line. The former are "lustrous as a fragment of broken moonstone," while the latter have a "fluid gleam." These two different qualities of precious stones have to be taken into consideration and respected

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by a master poet who wishes to embellish the beauty of the Goddess of the Word, instead of bringing any discredit to her directly or indirectly. The reference to the luster of broken moonstone is the syntactic aspect of word meaning content. Bursting into light is a function recognized in Pāṇini's famous grammar as the absolute principle of *sphoṭa*. The word *sphoṭa* is derived from *sphuṭ* (which means to burst into clarity, as in the case of a diamond.) The reference is made here to broken moonstone, possibly in the interest of contrasting this way of viewing word meaning with the kind of homogeneity to be assumed between whole moonstones, which have "an elusively fluid gleam." The syntax refers to the mechanical relationship between word and word in a sentence. Each word is considered by the Bhaṭṭa-Prabhākara school to be independent of the total meaning of the sentence and as having a disjunct function of its own. Sankara's followers, however, hold that meaning is an emergent factor resulting from the sentence as a whole and is not to be broken up into bits. Thus the *vaśini* and the *savitri* elements of language are treated here as complementary to each other. The *vaśinis* are to be joined on terms of equality with their counterpart, the individual word elements which generated meaning or *savitris*. These latter could be viewed as the cybernetic "information bits" in digital, binary and analog computers.

Semiosis is a process like the flowing of a liquid, while syntax is a sudden burst into scintillating light, or meaningfulness. As a jeweller might set a ruby and diamond side by side to enhance the beauty of a circular gold ear-ornament, not unlike the *srī cakra* as familiarly worn by Indian women, we could only enhance the beauty of the poetry by giving equal importance to syntactic bursting as well as semiotic flowing processes. When an author knows the secret of respecting these subtle semantic requirements, consciously or unconsciously, the beauty of his poetry is enhanced. The whole purpose of writing poetry is to enhance the beauty of the face of the Goddess of the Word. It could not be anything else, because no poet wants to defeat his purpose by creating ugliness.

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18

tanucchāyābhis te taruṇataraṇi srīsaraṇibhir
divam sarvām urvīm aruṇima nimagnām smarati yaḥ
bhavantyasya trasyad vanahariṇa śālīna nayanāḥ
sahorvaśyā vaśyā kati kati na gīrvāṇa gaṇikāḥ.

The radiant beauty of your delicate body submerging the sky
And the whole world in the sheer magenta glory of dawn—
He who is able to contemplate thus, wins over maids with
startled, gentle, wild-deer-eyes,
Together with Urvaśi and how many, how many other such
celestial damsels!

Mutual attraction between the sexes is a normal aspiration in the world of erotic life, not only of adolescents of no distinction, but also of beautiful persons, viewed from a neutral point between them, where the prototype of Absolute Beauty is to be attributed to the central Goddess of these verses. All manifestations of bodily beauty have to be derived from this central normative model. If we consider this model as real, all other manifestations of bodily beauty are only shadows or reflected images of the same. When we concede these facts in respect of Beauty, and try to fill the total ground or field with beauty of this content, we get roughly the picture presented here by Sankara.

In Verse 13 the same heavenly damsels of this verse were under reference in respect of their state of infatuation for an overaged ugly man, who had but the side-glance of the Goddess embellishing his attractiveness. There the attractiveness was a kind of reflected glory, even a little of which was enough to give him a heigntened personal value. This same idea of the mutual heightening of values between men and women of superior or ordinary levels, though in a more wholesale context of overwhelming beauty, is what is again pictured here in order to view the same subject from a more homogeneously unified viewpoint.

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Here it is a devotee within whose consciousness, as he meditates on Absolute Beauty, rich patches of shaded magenta are seen. The shade is derived from the earthy side, but the tender dawn contributes its light pink brilliance. Colors become beautiful by saturation of tint or brilliance. The brilliance is hypostatic in origin, the tint or shade must have a reference at the lower (horizontal) limit or origin. Saturation is a quality which depends upon the distance of the color, which decreases inversely when the patch of color increases its distance from the centre of the structure. These patches are not essentially different from the forest of lotuses described in Verse 16. Here the flower form is made to fade impressionistically into the background and the patches take their place with the same overpowering appeal. This is because contemplation here is evidently that of a yogi, also neutrally placed vis-a-vis the model of beauty at the core of his own field of consciousness.

Yoga could be conceived of as a type of union between values, and when this union takes place, the yogi is supposed to see a vision in his inner space, of which this verse is a description. If we suppose for convenience that the yogi is a man, each patch of shaded magenta would represent a beautiful young damsel who is the prototype of the Goddess of Beauty. The appeal of beautiful young women to men is to be taken for granted. Here two types of young women are brought into the picture, who have to be carefully distinguished: the "maids with startled, gentle, wild-deer-eyes," as opposed to Urvaśi and the countless other such celestial damsels. The latter have a hypostatic origin, while the former are evidently ordinary women of tribalistic origin, called *kimpuruṣas* in Kāḷidāsa's poetry, who inhabit the slopes of the Himalayas and live among the wild animals, especially with wild deer. The patches of magenta light which invade from the upper limit or those of magenta shade which permeate the scene from the lower limit of reference, represent damsels of one or the other of these two opposite types. The maids with startled deer-eyes may be humbler and more earthy than the celestial beauties, but what they lose by their humble origin they make up by their extraordinary vitality and alertness, as qualities of inner beauty. A cancellation of inner and outer beauty is thus to be understood here, as intended by the master poet.

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The yogi who, while meditating on the Goddess, is able to fill the total ground of his own consciousness with these two kinds of overwhelming magenta patches which, encroaching from both sides, lending light and shade, from opposite poles of the situation, so as to immerse the scene into a homogeneous glory of neither light nor shade, neither of heaven nor of earth, has accomplished an important stage in his spiritual progress. The value of such a vision is not to be minimized, and it is indicated here that such an experience of homogeneous and overwhelming beauty is more valuable than the legitimate ambition of all young human beings to be attractive to the other sex. The great number of damsels involved here shows that it is the earthy side that wins the game, while the others are to be counted among the numerous "runners-up".

A most important hint here is found in the phrase "submerging the sky and the whole world in the sheer magenta glory". This describes the full aurora effect that we can sometimes see from either one of the polar regions of the earth. Here Beauty cancels with its own counterpart, and the resultant is the yogic experience characterized by the absolutist touch.

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19

mukham bindum kṛtvā kucayugam adhas tasya tad adho
harārdham dhyāyed yo haramahiṣi te manmathakalām
sa sadyaḥ samkṣobham nayati vanitā ityatilaghu
trilokīm apy āśu bhramayati ravīndustanayugām.

Placing your face in the *bindu*, the twin breasts below,
And below still, in the realm of Hara's delight, the dynamics of your erotic power—
Oh consort of Siva, that he who can meditate in this way stirs the passions of women without delay is too trivial,
He at once agitates even the Woman of the three worlds whose twin breasts are the sun and moon.

The subject of stirring the sentiments of women is continued here. It is not the Advaitic Yogi to be presupposed here, but evidently a Kauḷin or a Vāmācārin. This verse is to be understood in the context of erotic mystical practices prevalent in India at the decadent period, when the rigorous moral standards gave way, in the nooks and corners of temple precincts, to questionable practices which were not always "above board". It is known that Sankara lived at this very period, and he must have known many Kauḷins, Samayins and Vāmācārins. This verse subjects the practices of such cults to a drastic dialectical revaluation in the light of Sankara's own uncompromising Advaitic position. The intention is unmistakably evident and it gives the key to how we should view this whole series of verses: as having nothing to do directly with Śākteya cults as such.

Certain texts that belong to this pre-Advaitic tradition are popular in Bengal even to this day, as is evident from the long passages reproduced by Sir John Woodroffe, who has specialized in this kind of Indian esotericism. The curiosity of certain scholars is guided by lesser motives than the finding of pure wisdom values. Museum pieces and archives are more interesting to them in their vocation primarily as scholars, and they have

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placed themselves outside the spirituality that they study. It is thus that some of these texts reveal an undertone of disapproval of Sankara's way of giving importance to the eternal female principle. They would rather have him give up his uncompromising love of pure wisdom in favor of a cult in which Sakti is to be considered the last word in philosophy. Woodroffe and Aurobindo Ghose both say that Sankara did not understand the particular aspects of these Sakti cults.

The slightly unilateral point of view prevailing in respect of the absolute principle of Beauty, which is to be brought more correctly under the nondualistic perspective, gives us a hold on the purpose of this verse. It wants to tell us that in the context of erotic mysticism there are two alternatives in visualizing structurally the Goddess involved. One could imagine a circle and insert into it the two orthogonal axes. He could even put the face of the Goddess at the zero point of the situation and then proceed, step by step, to fill in items of a vertical series of value factors, in descending order. The verse here enumerates the items thus to be arranged vertically on the denominator side. Sankara wished to point out here that such a form of meditation could be considered good, as far as it goes, but not good enough. He does not condemn the practice outright by saying that it is to be omitted. In the last two lines he brings out the contrast of the two approaches. It is below the horizontal line alone that the meditation should apply. Advaitic meditation requires a double correction or cancellation between numerator and denominator values. It is with reference to the breasts of a woman, placed hypostatically in the context of the values represented by the sun and the moon, that the cancellation here becomes possible, when the negative approach is replaced by one in which both the sides enter as equal counterparts to be cancelled out against each other.

When this Advaitic approach is borne in mind, all interest in attracting ordinary women in a given locality gives place instead to something noble, by which it is not an eternal female with an earthy reference who is to be won over, but a goddess, whose range of Beauty applies to all the three worlds (*bhūrloka, bhuvarloka* and *svarloka*). The amplitude of the parameter is thus not unilateral but fully absolutist, as indicated in the

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previous verse where both celestial and tribalistic damsels come under the attraction of a true yogi of a nondualistic status. Beauty goes beyond the question of attracting the opposite sex, for it could be thought of as illumining the Absolute itself. It is to be noted that Sankara does not discountenance the lower form of the Kaulin cult, but recommends its transcendence through a revised attitude.

Meditation requires a point of locus *(bindu)* where all dimensions converge and from where they emerge, thought of both as the source and the point of reabsorption of all manifestations. This is thus the neutral point placed between the two processes *(prabhava-praḷaya-sthānam)* which cancel each other out. The face is the index of one's beauty, and Siva is referred to in Verse 67 as looking at the reflection of his own face in a mirror and identifying it as the face of his wife, the Goddess. Thus the *bindu* is both subjective and objective in the revised version of meditation presented here.

The goddess presiding over the three worlds, referred to in the last line, suggests an absolutist version of the same Goddess, though not unilaterally understood, as that of the Kaulins. The revalued Goddess comprises within her scope both hypostatic and heirophantic items of value. Appreciation of value which is of an absolutist order can be said to attract that Goddess who represents in herself the same value. This is based on the law of "like attracts like." Attraction becomes synonymous with appreciation here in the context of absolutist devotion.

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20

kirantīm aṅgebhyaḥ kiraṇa nikurumbāmṛta rasam
hṛdi tvām ādhatte himakaraśilāmūrtim iva yaḥ
sa sarpāṇām darpam śamayati śakuntādhipa iva
jvarāpluṣṭān dṛṣṭyā sukhayati sudhādhāra sirayā.

Distilling the nectar which showers from the radiance that
emanates from all your limbs,
Creating a cool moonstone image of you from it and placing
this within the heart—
Whoever meditates in this way can quell the pride of serpents,
like the King of Birds,
And cure a fever patient with his glance, like an ambrosial
stream.

Verse 20 has to be read with Verse 10; between these two limiting verses we have had various perspectives of the dynamism implied between them. Verse 10 gives us a picture of ambrosial essence emanating from between the feet of the Goddess and how a double set of ramified streaks are to be visualized. In the present verse, her image is to be placed at the center of the heart of the contemplative who is her votary. Thus there are negative and positive attitudes possible in the practice of meditation or adoration of the Absolute Beauty or Goddess here. These subjective and objective versions are complementary, reciprocal, or compensatory, and if one is placed at the limit of the Self (the alpha point) the other is placed at the limit of the non-Self, (the omega point). They could even be cancelled out into the neutrality of the Absolute, as indicated in the last verse of this work, where everything is finally abolished.

It is recommended in this verse that the contemplative reduces the Goddess into the semblance of a statue made of moonstone. The gleaming luster of a moonstone has an interesting subdued tone about it, between brilliance and shade or tint, thus indicating that this statue is to be placed at a neutral point

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within the consciousness of the yogi, where the transition takes place from the subjective to the objective. This corresponds to what is technically understood in Patanjali's Yoga as *pratyāhāra*, efferent tendencies which are neutralized by afferent tendencies and vice versa. When this neutralization occurs, one experiences an inner psychic richness akin to *samādhi*.

The emanation of nectar refers to the efferent tendencies of the psyche, while crystallization at the heart-center into a "moonstone image" is the cultivation of the opposite (afferent) tendency of centralization at the locus of the heart. When this is accomplished, the yogi's personality, even in the outward sense, comes to have a revised status. His features radiate a confidence and a functional alertness or brilliance. This state has been referred to as *tejas*, and Swami Vivekananda's works, as also his personality, could be cited as evidence of this kind of yogic attainment. The voice is said to become mellowed, the skin becemes more glossy and tender and the metabolism functions in such a balanced and purificatory way that it is said to have the effect of *nāḍīśuddhi* (clarity or transparancy of the blood vessels and lymphatic system).

A yogi in such a state becomes extremely sympathetic to any man, woman or child, who is naturally attracted by him. Jesus was such a healer, always with a multitude of people around him. He becomes "the cynosure of all eyes" and the focal point of everyone's interest. There are many stories about the psychic feats of certain Tamil *siddhas* (saints); one, especially, was said to make the bones of a dead woman come to life by his songs, when he passed through a village funeral scene. We have to make allowances for natural exaggeration here. Another saint could cure miraculously the chronic stomachache of a Jaina king by sprinkling holy ashes as a treatment,.

In the *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*, Cūḍāla, the young queen of King Śikhidhvaja, tells her husband how, by practicing a yogic and contemplative way of life, she enhances her personal charm and value as a peaceful presence in the palace. Examples of such yogis are found anywhere in the world. They might seem very humble and harmless, but at a given moment they can vomit fire, as it were, if confronted with a proud person who might question the intrinsic positivity coming from pure contemplation only.

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The sage Kaṇva is described by Kāḷidāsa, in *Śakuntaʾa*, as having this kind of positive power of asserting himself *(tejas)*. He says that Kaṇva is like a lens which by itself is cold, but, when confronted with a source of light, can rise to the challenge and vomit its own fire. The mild life of forest dwellers is not to be challenged by forces less intense than those built up within the psyche by austerities.

The Sanskritic literary tradition has created a number of counterparts in the bird or animal world in which the pride of one is cancelled and superceded by the power of another. The lion is the counterpart of the elephant in this respect. The king of birds here, which is a vulture or eagle, has the power to cancel the pride of a serpent. This is cancellation in the created world of creatures, though the operation of psychic powers need not be confined to this outer world of the creation. It could also apply to the inner world of emotions.

The second instance of this verse belongs to this order. A man in a hospital, who is desperate about his own survival, sometimes enters into a negative state of depression, by which he gives up all hope. The doctor in charge can observe that the patient himself does not wish to live. Many instances are known in India of a yogi entering such a sorrowful situation and working a miracle of the kind referred to in this verse by instilling such confidence in the patients that they begin to gain hope instead of losing it. The turning point is as delicate as the retroaction in a thermostat. It can take place with the subtlest of influence in the world of psychophysics or psychosomatic medicine. Sympathetic emotions are contagious and can work wonders between individuals linked together in a bipolar reciprocity. The tears in the eyes of such a yogi will be found to be on the point of bursting out of sympathy. This kind of psychic power is not to be mixed up with other psychic powers, such as atomicity *(anima)*, et cetera, whose status is to be discussed in later verses. This is a global state of sensitivity that is very rich intellectually and emotionally at the same time.

The mode of operation for inducing such a state of yogihood is here explained as residing at the core of the heart of the yogi. That value represented by the Goddess of Absolute Beauty cancels out into a fully neutralized state of yogic perfection, by virtue of

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which, such *siddhis*, or so-called powers, become natural attributes of the yogically revalued personality. The yogi is always an interesting man to other human beings, especially to women and children.

The stream of nectar in terms of which the psychic powers are to be understood according to this verse, satisfies two requirements at one stroke. Nectar is a perceptual value, while the stream is an intelligible or cancellable value. When fused together, the ambrosial stream represents an emanation which is neither physical nor mental. One hears often of emanations or presences from saints or yogis. Language has conferred on one or the other or both of these aspects, some kind of reality, because it has to refer to either a fact truth or a logic truth. When fact and logic meet, it is a value like beauty that emerges, and combined words like "thinking substance" or "ambrosial stream" become permissible in this context. The duality, if it persists, must be countered by unitive understanding to become what is neither a streak of light nor ambrosia, but a central value called Beauty.

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21

taṭil lekhā tanvīm tapanaśaśi vaiśvānara mayīm
niṣaṇṇām ṣaṇṇām apyupari kamalānām tava kalām
mahāpadmāṭavyām mṛdita malamāyena manasā
mahāntaḥ paśyanto dadhati paramāhlāda laharīm.

With lightning streak body, made of sun, moon and fire,
Placed even above the six lotuses in a great lotus grove—
Those great ones as seers of such your aspect, having mind
free from dross and ignorance,
Experience the upsurging billow of ultimate delight.

In this verse the thought of Verse 20 is carried over, but in terms of a thin streak of lightning, joining the two vertical limits from end to end. We can notice in the first instance that the experience under reference here is one of ascent and not of descent, because it is stated in the second line that the six lotuses are left below. The amplitude of the Kauḷa cult consists of what is limited to the *ṣaḍ ādhāra (*six *cakras)*, which are to be imagined as six psychophysical levels. The *sahasrāra* and *kuḷakuṇḍa* are to be added above and below, respectively, to this set of six psychophysical units of beauty-value. They are described here as lotuses in a vertical series.

In the first line, the lightning streak body of the Goddess consists of the abstract light essence, to be distinguished when we descend from the sun to the moon to touch the fire. It is true that the sun is brilliant, the moon subdued, and the fire placed on earth. Although emitting the same light and heat, the fire is weighed down by the weight of the atmosphere. We have to separate mentally the qualitative aspect of light and give to this thin vertical streak its fourth or multi-dimensional status. This is to be done by a process of reduction, by omitting what is extraneous to the pure essence of light. The *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* calls upon the sun to reduce its radiance so that a more auspicious verticalized form of sunlight could be revealed. A

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flame within a windless room has often been used to describe the state of contemplative intelligence. Even the smoke of burnt incense can be seen to ascend vertically when the atmosphere is not disturbed. Within natural forces themselves, therefore, there is a tendency for a flame to mark out for us a path of spiritual ascent. Some of the Upanishads speak of this flame beckoning to the sacrificer to follow its lead upward to various value worlds. The thinner the streak, the better the absolute quality implied. That is the reason why the lightning streak body of the Goddess is prominently referred to in the first line. A lightning flash with thunder clap contains an element of wonder and suddenness which can heighten the meaning of Absolute Beauty, which is to be qualitatively understood rather than in its gross quantitative aspects.

It is necessary that the lightning streak body be "placed even above the six lotuses" for experiencing the ultimate delight referred to in the last line. To the extent that the lightning streak is thin and rises beyond the reach of lower utilitarian or hedonistic values, it is better for the resultant purity of the light it can induce in terms of an overwhelming experience. Ontologically it has to be beyond the limit of the velocity of sound to have supersonic effects revealed to the ear. This is also true of light or intelligence. The experience of delight becomes intensified by the height of the intelligence it can attain on the conceptual side. It is in this sense that "having mind free from dross and ignorance" is to be understood. The Bhagavad Gita also refers to that positive aspect of the vertical parameter which could be arrived at by putting the sun, moon and fire in a descending order to touch the zero point of our consciousness or of the positive cosmological set-up. The delight itself may be said to ascend from the *mūlādhāra* to the *ājñā cakra*. When these two lights meet, originating at the two limits, a flourescent light glows as a whole, as in the case of a tube-light, irrespective of the two electrodes. The flow of light represents the essence of the light within consciousness as an over-powering emotional experience; they are inseparable, like the two sides of a coin.

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22

bhavāni tvam dāse mayi vitara dṛṣṭim sakaruṇām
iti stotum vāñchan kathayati bhavāni tvam iti yaḥ
tadaiva tvam tasmai diśasi nija sāyujya padavīm
mukunda braḥmendra sphuṭa makuṭa nīrājita padām.

" O Goddess, You, on this your servant bestow a kind look"—
Thus intending to adore, as soon as one begins to say,
"O Goddess, You . . . , " You grant him that state of
identity with You,
Whose feet are illumined by the waving of the bright lights on
the diadems of Viṣhṇu, Brahma and Indra.

Prayers can be of different grades of efficacy or word content. Ritual actions of different kinds are also implied in the act of offering adoration or prayers to divinities or gods. An effective prayer is that which establishes the most direct bipolar contact between the supplicant and the god that is being addressed. The gods themselves represent different grades of values, according to the taste or understanding of the seeker. Compatibility between the counterparts of worshipper and worshipped, we see here, is the first and foremost condition for efficacy in prayer. Prayer is like an interaction in chemistry, where there is a kind of osmotic interchange of values taking place. It could also be likened to a mathematical equation. There are also many instances of reversible reactions and retroactive processes known in thermodynamic systems or in the context of cybernetics. Semantics and logistics also conform to a system in which there is a reciprocal exchange of meanings taking place interphysically and trans-subjectively. Such are some of the subtle structural implications to be kept in mind in order to understand the meaning of this verse.

In the first place, we have to remember that it is not just an ordinary goddess who is the object of adoration here, but it is the ultimate value in the Advaitic context that is being adored. The

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person fit for such an exalted and pure form of worship must also conform to certain requirements himself. He is not to be treated as a mere *upāsaka* (a worshipper merely paying lip service), who understands a dead letter better than the living word, due to his lukewarm or hidebound attitude, and who lacks wholeheartedness because he is too full of personal outward interests to keep his soul from entering the vertical, subtle eye of the needle.

The bipolarity between worshipper and worshipped cannot become fully established except on a homogeneous ground where these two counterparts participate on equal terms. This homogeneous ground is called worship. Here the worship is an osmotic interchange between the inner stuff of existential and essential factors. With the Goddess visualized existentially, the supplicant is to be her dialectical counterpart, in terms of the subsistent, with the overall situation of worship itself being the value factor, where the two counterparts cancel out in the glory of the Absolute. The worshipper and the worshipped enter into equal partnership here as interchangeable factors. The thinnest medium through which this participation can take place is where words meet the meaning corresponding to their form. The cybernetic or thermodynamic equilibrium could also be thought of as taking place in the thinner semantic world, where words and meanings circulate between subject and object, or Self and non-Self. Such an equilibrium is called homeostasis.

In the pure world of nonduality there is reversibility of reaction, as well as of the validity of an equation expressing the same in algebraic terms. There is also a similar one-to-one correspondence and cancellation in a more subtle domain. Whether in the world of logic or intentionalities, prayers are judged more by the intention implied in them than by the syntactical or pragmatic aspects of the words in which the prayers are clothed. In Advaita Vedanta it is granted that God and man are the same. If a god-like man waves lights to propitiate a god, it is quite natural to reverse the position and say that when such a worthy man humbles himself, the god also decides to wave lights to the personality of the supplicant in return. Thus full cancellation of counterparts occurs.

In the first line, though the prayer is only just begun, the Goddess is already willing to respond to the intention present.

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It is only for a kind look, and not for any worldly benefit, that the supplicant here prays, because as an Advaitin or sannyasin, he has no other favors to ask for. Not only is the intention readily recognized, but the response is both total and spontaneous, bestowing not just a mere kind look. Partial stimulus produces total reaction of the counterpart, here contained within the word "You," as between interchangeable counterparts. The Goddess seems to say, "You are not a mere worshipper, you are myself. There is equality of status and richness of quality between us, because Advaita cannot countenance any shade of duality."

There is a reference in the last line to worship by the three gods, who are supposed to be far superior to human beings as custodians of the three phenomenal functions in the cosmological set-up of the absolute Universe. But even if their worship should attain to its fullest benefit or merit, they, the most important agents in the phenomenal context of the universe, are here only given the same marks, when judged finally by effect, as the humble supplicant who stands outside the context of holiness or merit altogether. Vedantic worship is based on understanding rather than ritualistic merits belonging to mere Vedism.

The reference to the lights on the diadems, which are supposed to function here as the flames used in the ritualistic waving of lights in temples to propitiate various gods, is to indicate that Viṣṇu, Brahma and Indra are doing their best from the standpoint of their own notions and value systems—as far as such values are in their grasp— to honor the Absolute Goddess. But in spite of such efforts, they only get pass marks on the final test, while the nondualistic worshipper not only passes freely beyond such a point of perfection but gets the worship of the Goddess herself. Such is the overwhelming beauty of this situation, to be understood in the overall context of intentionality.

The "identity with You" is only to be treated as a corollary to any one of the four well known *mahāvākyas* of the Upanishads each of which is an equation between the Self and the non-Self in the context of Absolute Wisdom.

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Intentionality counts more than words. We would be justified in thinking that words themselves are finally extraneous to the situation from the last verse of the poem, where Sankara washes his hands completely of even having taken the trouble of writing these verses, politely excuses himself and withdraws out of the scene of holiness.

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23

tvayā hṛtvā vāmam vapuṛ aparitṛptena manasā
śarīrārdham śambhor aparam api śaṅke hṛtam abhūt
yad etat tvad rūpam sakalam aruṇābham triṇayanam
kucābhyām ānamram kuṭila śaśicūḍālamakuṭam.

Absorbing the left half of the body of Siva and still
unsatisfied in mind,
The other, I surmise, became absorbed also; therefore,
This your form, having three eyes and bent by twin breasts,
Wearing a curved crescent-bedecked crown, became of
magenta glory.

The cancellation of worshipper and worshipped is accomplished by virtue of grace between counterparts having different value grades. Each layer is to be removed, one after the other, in a certain epistemological and methodological order, before we can understand how a reality that is beyond the four dimensions could be revealed to view, when shorn of all that is extraneous to the situation.

In this verse Pārvati, the wife, appears to be devouring her husband alive. When this act of mutual absorption or cancellation attains to its full limit, what remains of Siva, in vague outline, are the thin crescent moon and three eyes, immersed in the pale magenta halo or glory of the Goddess. On the part of the Goddess, what remains of the eternal feminine principle are the twin breasts, which are so ponderous, by the weight of their own responsibility of motherhood, that they make her body bent. Her own body is completely dissolved in terms of an all-prevading magenta, dispersed in infinite space, and thus made equally magenta in content everywhere. It is as thin and as tender in consistency, in existential terms, as the mathematical crescent, of a subsistential order, against which the vaporous cloud of color is to be cancelled out. The three eyes are retained as belonging both to the onlooker as well as the one looked upon,

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interchangeably and indifferently. It is the third eye, through which the thinnest aspect of the vertical parameter is to pass as an eternal inner witness, that is common to both Siva and Pārvati.

When scrutinized more closely, these four lines reveal the overall epistemological or cosmological dimensions that even modern physicists are beginning to recognize. The first line promotes us from a one-dimensional to a two-dimensional perspective as a horizontal line that is being cancelled from the right to the left, as when we travel from real to imaginary or negative numbers.

If one goes to a shop and asks for ten oranges and does not pay for five of them, the value of these five oranges is seen to be negative, because he still owes the shopkeeper some money. The five oranges that have been paid for can be eaten with greater satisfaction. Such is the value gradation to be understood here. In line two, we notice that instead of paying the debt she insists on cancelling it. The "shopkeeper" who is being refused payment is not a stranger or outside person, but represents the dear husband, Siva himself, who is being bodily consumed by the wife out of all kindness. The debt is thus being cancelled at the second level of virtuality.

What remains is the verticalized version of Siva and Pārvati, not of the order of mere cancellable equations arithmetically understood, but in terms of a purer three-dimensional or four-dimensional context of higher mathematics. Such is what we find in integral, differential or infinitesimal calculus, which require higher powers of abstraction and generalization. The operations take place in the form of thinner perimeters or asymptotic curves cutting the parameter at different levels. Cantor's mathematics also admits of a one-to-one correspondence between many grades of infinite sets or ensembles. Points, curves and lines, all thinly visible through a magenta haze—which itself results from ultra-violet and infra-red neutralizing each other on the side of real existences—are all meant to give us this finalized picture of the value of Absolute Beauty to be shared in common between Siva and Pārvati, without any vestige of duality intervening between them.

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The bending with breasts is highly suggestive of curves in calculus. The thin crescent would suggest infinitesimal variation. The parameter traverses the total situation, like the streak of lightning in Verse 21. The ocean of magenta can also be thought of as encroaching into the total field to obliterate all duality from below, as intended also in Verse 18. We see that the crown is still retained in the picture. This is merely to mark the omega point of the total situation. The alpha point is to be understood and it will come into evidence when the process of absorption here is reversed and oriented negatively. The culmination is still marked by the magenta glory of the last line, which is not a point, but is meant to fill all space horizontally. The "crescent-bedecked crown" is more fourth-dimensional or time-like than space-like. The whole picture results from an ascending process rather than a descending one.

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jagat sūte dhātā harir avati rudraḥ kṣapayate
tiraskurvann etat svam api vapur īśas tirayati
sadāpūrvas sarvam tad idam anugṛḥṇāti ca śivaḥ
tavājñām ālambya kṣaṇa calitayor bhrūlatikayoḥ.

Brahma creates the world, Viṣṇu protects, Śiva destroys;
Negating his own body, the Lord fades out;
As a result, Śiva, who has eternity for a prefix (Sadāśiva),
Blesses all this, obeying the order derived from
your instantly vibrating vinelike eyebrows.

This verse, placed in its correct epistemological perspective, views the same process as in the previous verse, but from a partially revised perspective. Here we go from the side of causes to the side of effects. Thus, when we say that Brahma creates, the reasoning process normally travels from the cause or source of creation, which is below, to a higher level where the effects of creation are more pluralistic or multiple. This function of creation, represented by Brahma, can be structurally imagined to be like a tree. When this process of creation has gone far enough, the divided multiplicity of entities creates a (horizontal) firm ground for human actions and reactions to operate upon, through which individuals could promote themselves further in the vertical scale of values. This is the Viṣṇu world of graded value stratifications, cutting through which, at right angles, each man or woman attains to life's fulfil ment, each according to one's desires or just deserts. In every sentient being capable of aspiring for spiritual progress, one could imagine a virtical parameter cutting through the horizontal sleeping Viṣṇu-world, to the vertical Śiva-world.

Beyond these Viṣṇu stratifications of graded life-purposes lies the pinnacle point from which Śiva descends, flame in hand, to burn the various value cities, so as to bring balance again between creation and its inevitable opposite. Śiva, conceived as the pinnacle of the situation, is not a mere abstraction, but

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participates in existence through Pārvati, with whom he shares his own body as the androgynous god *ardha-nāri-īśvara* (half-woman god). Their relation here is one of back to back double correction, and not one of mere horizontal importance. Thus, participating with his own counterpart at the zero point and sharing the horizontality, though only through the magenta of the previous verse, he is here represented as being interested in abolishing even this thinnest of absolute substances. This is what is indicated in the second line where Siva fades out from the second to the third dimension. He attains to greater heights of abstraction and generalization, when the term "Sadāśiva" more aptly applies to him, in his present more exalted condition than just Siva as an agent who destroys the second-dimensional world.

If this process of exaltation of Siva should be accentuated further, even the various value worlds would stand in danger of being abolished altogther, leaving nothing by which the soul of man could attain its purpose. Life has to be significant, if nothing else. Any philosophy that does not retain this, as the last residue at least, and drops life of all its significance or purpose, becomes a philosophy that is empty of consolation and cancels its own *raison d'etre*. Vedanta does not aim at such an ultimate bankruptcy of significance or purposes which other philosophies more thinly speculate, such as lukewarm "maybe/maybe not" attitudes—or other speculative systems which don't go beyond paradoxes to purposefulness in life—might claim to do. It is to avoid the total bankruptcy of purpose that the vinelike eyebrows of the Goddess have the all-important role of saving the situation. She does not show her concern in any overtly gross terms, but Siva can see from her vibrating eyebrows that she is highly concerned about the possible destruction of all her progeny in the form of created beings. She, in principle, is in charge of all of them, and she cannot deny her own proper function. The world has to goon as it was in the beginning, now and for ever, without end.

The blessing in the fouth line is to be treated as the combined operation or function of the rays of Siva and Pārvati together, with no element of separation, in keeping with Advaita Vedanta.

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trayāṇām devānām triguṇa janitānām tava śive
bhavet pūjā pūjā tava caraṇayor yā viracitā
tathā hi tvad pādodvahana maṇipīṭhasya nikaṭe
sthitā hy ete śaśvan mukuḷita karottamsa makuṭāḥ.

The three gods, who are originated from your
three nature modalities,
Worship You, oh Consort of Siva, that is alone
worship offered to your twin feet when,
Standing eternally beside your gem-decked footstool,
their hands are joined, bud-like, well above their crowns.

There are two alternate grades of worship seen referred to within the limits of this verse. The three gods Brahma, Viṣṇu and Siva are represented in the first half of the verse as worshipping properly, but this is not good enough in the light of the alternative kind of worship mentioned in the second half. When life interests fall within the range or amplitude of hedonistic or relativistic interests, they can be said to be performing a proper or correct worship according to Vedic norms. But there is an epistemological, methodological and axiological difference when the same adoration is performed as described in the latter half of the verse, standing round a footstool and raising their worshipful hands to the highest omega point. They are reaching fully from hierophantic levels to the limits of the hypostatic.

The correctness of the *pūja* depends upon the fact that it is performed by representatives of three sets of values, within which life moves within a Vedic frame of reference, and could not be called anything other than a proper *pūja*. But it is not enough if they just get pass marks on the examination. There is still scope for futher revision of this correct *pūja*, so as to transcend values limited to the nature modalities recognizable as the three *guṇas*. It is Vedic ritualism that, limited to the world of values, comes under the category of hedonistic pleasure. Heaven

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is filled with such items of value, and heavenly values form a system wherein the three gods are also generated out of the three nature modalities. Thus, in this verse, they are called *triguṇa-janitānām* (born as effects from the three nature modalities).

Brahma is the *sāttvic* god of orthodox Vedic values. Viṣṇu represents the action proper to a king or a ruler, which brings up the middle stratum of the set-up, as we have seen in the first and second verses of this poem. As for Siva, he is known to be an *akula* (a man of no social status), in the context of Vedism. His antagonism to Vedic sacrifices is proved by his not being invited to the sacrifice made by his father-in-law, Dakṣa. Protesting againt this insult, the daughter of Dakṣa, who is Siva's wife, burns herself in the same sacrificial flames. Siva thus belongs to the opposite side from that of Brahma, and his function is also diametrically opposed to the function of creation represented by Brahma.

To picture the situation in this verse we could imagine a crystal globe within which the crowned figures of these three gods are seen to be bending with a horizontalized elliptical distortion as they are offering their adoration to the central principle of Beauty. This is the proper Vedic attitude, where the hedonistic values of the three *guṇas* are still operative. Sometimes such a set-up is referred to as *saguṇabrahman* or *aparabrahman*, which is the lower, immanent value to be equated with *brahman*.

Vedanta does not think in terms of heavenly values, because the alternating process of *samsāra* does not stop completely by going to heaven. One returns to the same worlds of hedonistic values when he decends again from heaven to live comfortably in a suburbia on earth. This is brought out in many places in the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. The Vedanta believes in a full dose of absolutism, which will cure one once and for all from a recrudescence or lapse into the same relativistic love of pleasure, whether in heaven or on earth. Emancipation, without any possibility of relapse, is the model held up by Upanishadic teaching; one should not be born again, irrespective of heavenly or earthly values. Such values have to be transcended though

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not rejected. Nobody should think that a comfortable life should be willfully avoided in favor of austerities that might torture the life within us.

Transcending inclusively without contradiction is the Advaitic doctrine that is being underlined here. The two alternative pictures of worship in this verse are to be comparatively understood. The former represents the Vedic set-up within the scope of the three nature modalities—the pure *(sattva)*, the active *(rajas)*, and the tragic *(tamas)*—which are still fully operative. The gods themselves, or at least their crowns, as they bend over the Beauty principle at the center, have generic relationship with the three modalities at the lower point of reference. The crown is the limit of the effect side while their own feet mark the cause or source as stemming out of the three modality principles of nature. The Vedantic alternative to this slightly horizontal version is to be imagined as an ellipse accentuated vertically, like a rugby football held with the narrow end upward. While the Vedic set-up is good enough, this is still better. It is like saying that it is very good to pass the B.A. examination, but it is better to pass the M. A. examination. This justifies the reference to the first kind of devotion being true worship only when it is done as described in the second half of the verse.

The Bhagavad Gita brings out this same idea in Chapter 12 where it discusses *saguṇa* (lower) worship of *brahman*, as against *nirguṇa* worship that transcends the three *guṇas*, or *triguṇa atīta*. There is a further reference in the Gita making this point unequivocally clear, when Arjuna is told by Krishna that the Vedas are under the sway of values within the scope of the three *guṇas* (*traiguṇya viṣaya*). Arjuna is asked to transcend Vedic values in favor of the more correct Advaitic position of the Gita teaching.

The gods are eternally standing, in the last line, bent in adoration besides the gem-decked footstool at the bottom point. At the same time, with their bud-like hand gestures, they are directing their adoration to the omega point "well above their crowns." This is how hedonism and relativism are to be transcended by the full blast of absolutism held up as a model in these verses. The lower form is not excluded, but it is fully inclusively transcended. One should not purposely choose a bed of nails

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if a spring cot is available, or live among scorpions and serpents in a forest, if the place could be made less distracting for meditation. *Rājasa tyāga* (willful rejection) is not true renunciation as understood in the correct yogic context of Vedanta. The theory of the three modalities is completely expounded in the Gita in Chapter 14, called *guṇatrayavibhāga yoga* (the unitive way of transcending the three nature modalities). Worship itself becomes extraneous in the context of Vedanta. The difference is as between being dressed properly and being completely unconscious of proper dress convention at all.

The "twin feet" of the third line could be placed structurally at the center of the total situation. Passing on to the fourth line, however, the gem-decked footstool would represent the feet, but with greater ontological richness, though this negative aspect is only to be cancelled out against the bud-like folded hands of the gods held above their crowns. The word "eternally" suggests the heightened absolutist context of the second, Vedantic, alternative recommended here. The reference to gems in the footstool is to raise its value as a hierophantic presence.

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26

viriñciḥ pañcatvam vrajati haris tr āpnoti viratim
vināśam kīnāśo bhajati dhanado yāti nidhanam
vitandrī māhendrī vitatir api sammīlita dṛśā
mahāsamhāre'smin viharati sati tvat patir asau.

Brahma regains his (pure) quintuple nature,
Viṣṇu becomes passionless,
The God of Death meets with destruction,
the God of Wealth becomes bankrupt,
Great Indra becomes functionless with half-shut eyes—
In this great doom, Oh Constant Spouse, your Lord alone sports.

Between the three verses, 24, 25 and 26, there is a two-sided dynamism that we can recognize as pertaining to a world process on a certain kind of world ground, which the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita (VIII. 18) calls *avyakta* (unmanifested). Everything has a vague, amorphous, or mathematical status at a given time anteriorly. It assumes a colorful and real form with different perspectives in a middle stage. In a final stage reabsorption again takes place. Besides the Bhagavad Gita, Cartesian Philosophy can also understand a cyclically alternating process with these three phases as taking place between what it calls *res cogitans* and *res extenso*. Thus, we could have the same basic reference in terms of Cartesian correlates instead of by description; *res cogitans* would be a vertical perspective, and *res extenso* the alternative horizontal version of the same. Bergson would prefer to distinguish them as time-like and space-like counterparts.

Vedanta is familiar with a similar theory, having a double perspective in the manner of viewing the status of elementals. Professor O. Lacombe describes this theoretical process called *pancīkaraṇa*, as simply as possible:

> The great elements do not enter as such into the composition of individual realities, but undergo first a sort of

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shaking-up which is called quintipartition—*pancīkaraṇa*. Each of them is divided by the creator into two parts, and one of these two halves again into four parts. Each one of these quarters is then mixed with the half that has been left intact of each of the four other elements. It thus results that each element composes itself thereafter as follows: One-half element pure, plus one-eighth of each of the four other elements. It is these composite elements which serve for the constitution of individual things. The dominant proportion of the primary element safeguards its authenticity. But the adjunction of the other elements explains the participation of things with all other things and explains certain anomalies of perception.[1]

When the elementals remain in their pure self-transparent form, they consist of *tanmātras* (entities-in-themselves). Manifestation, in realistic terms, takes place when these rays are brought under a perspective by which they attain different degrees of opacity or transparency between themselves.

In the world of light, various interference effects occur when double-polarized light is brought into interplay; depending on the angle of incidence or refraction and due to diffraction or dispersal of light, interesting interference figures are revealed. There is a mesh or lattice which obstructs or permits light waves of different wavelengths to pass through crystals, depending on whether the obstruction is placed at right angles or not. Without entering into the intricacies of such optical phenomena, we shall merely say that Vedanta has long adhered to the theory of *pancīkaraṇa*. Horizontally perceived, the elementals show a heterogeneity between the five of them, but when the *tanmātras*, as basic elemental units, are rearranged serially and vertically—after being subjected to the process called "quintuplication" or "quintipartition"—they attain to a certain homogenized and serial continuity or transparency along the vertical axis. Elementals, when remaining in a crude state, give a horizontal outlook to the world of manifestation. When subjected to quintuplication, they become transparent in themselves. In television, it is two sets of waves intersecting at right angles, on the basis of an orthogonal matrix or lattice consisting of small rectangular units,

1. O. Lacombe, *L'Absolu Selon le Vedanta*, (Paris, 1937), our translation.

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that results in the picture effect. Even in chemistry we can either see the elementals arranged in a vertical series according to the periodic law, or we could study the properties of chemicals by reactions in the laboratory. The periodic law gives us a verticalized perspective, while the actual properties of chemicals are presented to the senses as a horizontalized reference.

Verse 24 is a reference to the positive creative process, but Verse 26 presents the same picture as a negative process. In Verse 24 the balancing factor comes from the Devi's vinelike eyebrows, while in Verse 26 Devi herself lends her reality to keep her husband continuously alive even as a thin parameter. In Verse 25 we find a double picture, as seen through two kinds of translucency: one in which the horizontal prevails over the vertical, and the other in which the vertical prevails over the horizontal. Creation and dissolution are brackets facing opposite ways, traversed by the parameter that represents pure becoming, independent of time or space.

With these preliminaries in our mind, we have to understand that the figure of Brahma, as a member of the Hindu trinity, is the first to be put into the melting pot, because of the quintuplication to which all the elementals are going to be subjected in the negative process that is being presented in this verse. In the case of Viṣṇu, the effect of such a negative process is to make him passionless, because the passions absorb each other without finding horizontal expression. He is subjected to a state of neutralization or normalization at the central stratum, wherein alone he is operative. When we apply the same cancellation of tedencies to the principle of Death, we see that the very meaning of death cancels itself out by the double negation involved. Indra is a god at the stratum where hypostatic values prevail. He is also struck by a certain verticalized immobility, by which all his horizontalized tendencies are balanced against their opposites. The result is that he remains immobile, as if in a picture, neither opening his eyes too wide to show any curiosity, nor fully unaware of the interests with which he is surrounded.

This state of dissolution into the original amorphous transparency of the elementals in themselves is called *pralaya*

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(merging back into pure and primary formless absolutist status). This picture is not unlike the picture of doomsday, except that in the idea of doomsday the dissolution has a futuristic or apocalyptic status. The deluge of doomsday could be treated as complementary to the present image. The prophetic religions give primacy to a doomsday, or Day of Judgment, but the antediluvian picture is also a part of the Old Testament. Whatever the theory involved, all that we have to know here is that, in the form of an amorphous matrix, or in the form of crystals once again dissolved, we can get different perspectives, three of which are given in Verses 24, 25 and 26. Many other perspectives could also be visualized without violating the requirements of the Science of the Absolute. When we take a normalized position, the result is the one stated in the Bhagavad Gita, where Krishna tells Arjuna that the kings and the armies are not there except in *brahman*, and that they are not going to be created thereafter either. This is the perfectly normalized picture, based on which we could get as many varied perspectives as we like, all of which, however, have to be put within the limits indicated here without contradiction. A cryptocrystalline homogeneous rock is as good a rock as a porphyritic one (full of different kinds of well-formed crystals put together). The Absolute is the matrix of molten liquid for all of them.

What we have to note here is whether the process is a pasitive or a negative one. The status of the Absalute, represented by the vertical parameter, remains unaffected and the same throughout, as in the case of the entropy of the universe tending to be a zero or attaining to a maximum. *Brahman*, the Absolute, as a correlating thread passing through all possible values, is familiar to us in the Gita (VII. 7) which says that everything in the universe is threaded through by Krishna, the absolute Value of all values. Narayana Guru also identifies the Absolute as God and compares him to the highly mathematical dimension called the depth of the sea, in his *Daivadaśakm* (Verse 4). "Fire cannot burn this (parameter), nor water wet it . . . the sword does not cleave it, "as the Gita says (II. 23,24). This eternal and changeless parameter or line is what represents the Absolute as nearly as we could think of it in any concrete term.

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We have added the word "pure" in brackets in the first line to show that it is a negative process that is taking place here, rather than one of positive creation. By saying that the God of Death meets destruction, we are only indulging in a tautology. We neither improve Death nor degrade him in any way. He just marks the zero point by being doubly corrected.

Concerning the reference to the God of Wealth becoming bankrupt: Wealth functions by getting or spending, which are horizontal processes. Without these two actions the bank becomes sealed against the public, although this does not mean that the bank no longer has any money.

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27

japo jalpaḥ śilpam sakalam api mudrāviracanā
gatiḥ prādakṣiṇya kramaṇam aśanādyāhutividhiḥ
praṇāmas samveśas sukham akhilam ātmārpaṇadṛśā
saparyā paryāyas tava bhavatu yanme vilasitam.

Muttertings, incantations; workmanship, ritual
acts of hand gestures; movement,
Circumambulation; food, offerings, inclination,
adoration by lying down—
Let all such enjoyments as coming within the scope
of self-surrender,
And thus synonyms for worship of You, be what from
me might shine forth.

Worship is a form of self-surrender. Such self-surrender yields joy to the person thus surrendering. Thousands of temples in this world, especially those based on ritualistic idolatry in South India, have various forms of ritualistic activities which could all be thought of as belonging to one ensemble of ritualistic actions, in the same way as Wittgenstein would bring all aspects of logical discourse together under the one reference of "word games." Sankara wants to find a synonym which will inclusively cover the whole wide range of possible ritualistic actions that an elaborately trained Tantric priest might employ before an idol within the sacred sanctum of a temple, under the inclusive reference of a *saparyāparyāya.*

The synonym and antonym could then be cancelled ontologically into the joy of self-surrender, which would then be an absolute Value. What shines forth from the supplicant is to be cancelled ontologically against the value significance emanating from the idolatrous presence within the temple. When subjected to this double process, we get a reversible equation or reaction which is to be imagined as taking place between the idol and the worshipper prostrating before the idol. The items that express

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self-surrender in one form or another could be as varied as the outward forms of expression of devotion. But if we should put a circle around the whole lot of them, amounting to the same joy of self-surrender vis-a-vis non-Self value of the idol itself—treating the former as an inclusive ensemble representing an experience of joy in the act of worship—a fully cancellable situation results.

The Self is equated with the non-Self and vice versa. Sankara refuses to take any notice of the individual gestures, meaning of *mudras*, or attitudes, however varied they might be. He, as an Advaitin, is not interested in Tantrism for its own sake. He has his own correct methodology, by which he would find the synonymous counterparts capable of reduction logically, semantically, or even mathematically, into terms that could cancel out into the pure value notion represented by the Absolute. In the light of such a cancellation, it is easy to see that the authorship by Sankara of a Tantric text—which has been treated as questionable even by such scholars as Woodroffe and Brown, not to mention more recent Tantric commentators of this text—does not present any problem to us at all. Sankara is not interested in Tantrism at the expense of Advaita. On the contrary, Tantrism is revalued and restated, as is so clearly evident in this verse, to serve the purpose and heighten the doctrine of pure Advaita Vedanta, for which Sankara has always taken a consistently uncompromising stand.

It is because many scholars, both Indian and Western, have failed to see how Sankara's protolinguistic non-verbose approach presented here is fully compatible with the more verbose or metalinguistic version of Advaita, found in his *bhāṣyas* (commentaries), that the whole suspicion about his authorship has arisen. While all the evidence taken as a whole tends to suggest Sankara as the only possible author, panditry and pedantry at present have conspired to call into question such clear indications as presented in this verse because of their own inability to see the same doctrines as that of the *bhāṣyas*, when presented here in a protolinguistic form. The difference between these two forms of expression is ignored by pandits even to this day. The available editions of the *Saundarya Laharī* do not succeed even in giving us a bare gist of the sense of these verses, whether for genuine

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appreciation or at least in the name of academic or artistic dilettantism. We have said that, as far as the authorship of Sankara is concerned, the allusion to "this Dravidian child" in Verse 75 leaves no room for vain speculation, except when pseudo-orthodoxy enters into the picture to complicate matters beyond simple recognition. In our comments we have tried to take a simpler view without getting lost in the great forest of words, which Sankara himself takes care to warn us against in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (Verse 60).

In this verse, then, we can easily see how Sankara takes care to reduce Tantrism in terms of an equation between two aspects of the Self, exactly as in the case of the *Mahāvākyas* (great dicta), which together constitute the keystone of the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta. The purpose of Sankara in this verse is patently clear, and also puts beyond all dispute the question of his authorship.

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sudhām apy āsvādya pratibhaya jarāmṛtyu hariṇīm
vipadyante viśve vidhiśatamakhādyā diviṣadaḥ
karāḷam yat kṣveḷam kabaḷitavataḥ kālakalanā
na śambhos tanmūlam tava janani tāṭaṅka mahimā.

Even on partaking of nectar—so potent against fear,
old age and death—
All such gods as Brahma and Indra reach their doom;
Even on swallowing that terrible superpoison, for Siva Time's
function is not operative,
The source here being, Oh Mother, the power of your
marital string.

Time, or duration, is the central concept on which the status of Siva is brought into relief as an eternal principle—beyond the reach even of the process of becoming—in his pure personal value, as against other gods who are all subject to nominal factors in a graded epistemological order. Magnetic fields operate on lesser levels with other dimensions than that of high voltage electricity. Siva's function could become still more absolutist, and cancel further vestiges of duality, until immobility and mobility exist together, beyond the taint of the weakness of the human mind to create its own paradoxes. Paradoxes vanish when pure absolutism becomes possible to the human mind, by getting as far removed as possible from relativistic and hedonistic considerations of visible or intelligible values. Siva represents this high point, where he reigns eternally supreme, for Himself, in Himself, by Himself and through Himself. It is this Advaitic doctrine that is intended to be underlined in this verse with the help of the different functionaries or demiurges, who also belong to the same setup when viewed from a perspective of lesser voltage, as it were, than what applies to Siva himself.

The first two lines take cognition of Brahma and Indra, the most flagrantly vitalistic demiurges, to whom good nourishing

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food and tonics are very important to make them continue in vitality and normal health. One can become sleek by drinking meat broth, but the next fever might wash down the drain all the health thus gained. Life has within its core a source of energy which can defy doctors' prescriptions, and assert itself in spite of the grave mistakes that doctors may commit. In this sense, we could say that the patient continues to live in spite of the havoc caused by pills or medicines.

Nectar is the natural nourishment of the gods, but Siva is capable of surviving even a superpoison and remaining in a fully operative form according to his own function, which is a vertical and not a horizontal one. Transporting a lorry-load of building stones from one place to another is an example of horizontal function, while electromagnetic transmission of signals from ship to ship is an example of vertical function. The first must be kept up by crude fuel in the combustion engine, while the other belongs to a fourth-dimensional order. Between these two extremes of horizontal and vertical functionings, we have to postulate the ordinary Siva, or the same demiurge status as Indra and Brahma, to understand why the power of the marital string confers the final absolute status on Siva who would have evaporated had he only represented his usual function as a fourth-dimensional principle of positive becoming. But by a process of double negation, operative at the positive limit, he is not only a "mover," but an "unmoved Mover," as in the philosophy of Aristotle. The something that counters the exaggeration of ascent, by making Siva again descend from his high world of intelligibles to a more normal position at the core of the total value situation, is represented here by Devi. Normal food would represent negative entropy and this guarantees the neutralization of too rapid a metabolic process which would, in the case of childbirth, for instance, kill the mother. Entropy has to counter negentropy to establish equilibrium, as in thermodynamics. In this sense, the entropy of the universe tends to be zero. The total energy of the universe remains a constant according to the law of the conservation of energy. Here physics speaks nearly the same language as this verse. Killing human beings by too rapid a process of change through time is the function of the God of Death, called Kāla, personifying Time with a capital letter. Siva

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represents a principle or a parameter cutting across the horizontal principle of death. He is beyond the reach of paradox as an "unmoved Mover." It is in this sense that time is non-operative in the case of the absolutist Siva.

If becoming is vertically positive, then non-becoming, countering its own mobility, is a function having its reference at the negative vertical limit. Such a negative limit is here the proper domain of the Goddess, although for normative purposes we would locate her position at the central zero point. Just as Siva can ascend or descend from his norm, Pārvati can also ascend or descend between the zero point and the alpha point. When Siva and Pārvati operate as complementary, compensatory and reciprocal functions, they properly cancel each other out into the value implied in this verse. The power of the marital string, placed on the neck of the Goddess, has reference to its opposite whose source lies in the kind intention of Siva, and has a one to one correspondence with it. It represents a potent factor of intelligent function, and whether the function is in the head or in the legs is not important. The limits of double negation could be at a level where it could operate most effectively. In respect of the Goddess, the lower limit is more intuitive and more effective than the functions that could be attributed to the head of Siva. The one to one correspondence between the two opposite tendencies has to be respected, whether placed in the neck or in the feet. Duality is abolished where they are correctly cancelled out against each other. A topsy-turvydom, at first confusing to the beginner in structural language, has already been explained under Verse 8.

How Siva swallowed the superpoison is found in the story of the churning of the milk ocean, wherein also the female form of Viṣṇu called Mohini, acts as a saving factor. Here it is the marital string which is the principle of normalization.

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29

kirīṭam vairiñcam parihara puraḥ kaiṭabhabhidaḥ
kaṭhore koṭīre skhalasi jahi jambhāri makuṭam
praṇamreṣv eteṣu prasabham upayātasya bhavanam
bhavasyābhyutthāne tava parijanoktir vijayate.

"Remove Brahma's crown from before; You are
going to hurt
The hard headgear of Viṣṇu; bypass Indra's crown;"
As they remain inclining in front of You at the very
moment when You are about to rise for Him
On His homecoming—these words of your retinue ring supreme.

Verses 29 and 30 represent two more normalized versions, before the punctuation between sections of ten verses, and passes over to another aspect of the Absolute as a significant value. We have to imagine here the same beautiful palace with its groves and gardens and flower trees on a gem-island, first mentioned in Verse 3 and developed further in Verse 8, and the Goddess sitting in full imperial glory within a *maṇḍala* in an architectural motif both circular and square. She sits in the center, evidently enthroned in all her Absolutist Beauty and magnificence. We can put into this same picture all those attending on Siva, who belong to her personal retinue, on one side of the total situation. On the other side, there are the female attendants who are maidens-in-waiting for the private requirements of the Empress herself. We can also imagine armed guards for her protection, distributed more peripherally within the four walls or even outside. The central room represents the sacred sanctuary where the Goddess of Beauty presides, commanding the total and complex setup of her retinue. We could imagine the three demiurges, who have figured consistently in many previous verses, in the act of inclining, in one of the two alternate manners depicted in Verse 25. The vertical version is the one where the three modalities are transcended. The horizontal version is where their crowns are

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going to be hurt, as the verticalized phase is likely to be induced at a given moment, since it should be imagined that Siva has just been sighted by the retainers outside as about to visit the Goddess in all her normal glory. Fanfares, trumpets and kettle drums could all be inserted into the picture as we like, according to personal taste, but the essence of the occasional moment is what is to be intuitively caught and understood here.

All but the last line of this verse are to be taken as the words coming from the mouths of the retinue surrounding the Goddess, who are concerned that the proper dignity and importance be given to Devi above all others. It is not the horizontal setup of the Goddess that counts, but the words that ring above the total physical situation as a warning and important directive, although only intentional in status. The words rise above the totality of the important occasional moment to be placed in an eternal present.

The three gods wear crowns of different grades of hardness or objectivity on the side of effects. The conical crown generally has a gem marking its terminus point in the case of each of the gods, whose functions we already know. Viṣṇu's headgear is the hardest to transcend. Brahma can be asked to take his crown away from where it can come into clash with that of Devi, who is fully intending to rise but not actually doing so, still anticipating the homecoming of her Lord. The headgear of Indra is to be more lightly bypassed because he has only the status of a demiurge among demiurges. He is not an *īśvara*, but only a *deva*, still steeped in the world of hedonistic values. All these gods can be thought of as bending over the crown of Devi herself in such a way as to obstruct the vertical path that Devi's own crown-tip might have to cross vertically. It is her verticality that is to be given primacy on this occasion, and the armed guards are in charge of precautions against possible untoward events. The demiurges might intrude their crowns, representing their pride, and obstruct the free passage of the absolute principle as it passes vertically when she rises to receive Siva, who descends from the heights of his own mental horizon. The verticality attains its maximum when both are fused together into one parameter touching both the higher and the lower limits on the very occasion or moment of the eternal present,

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wherein Absolute Beauty is about to triumph in its full glory. Intentionality here is as good as an accomplished fact, so one should not ask whether Devi actually rose from her seat or not. This is the perfect picture of absolutist occasionalism in which no brute event really takes place.

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30

svadehodbhūtābhir ghṛṇibhir aṇimādyābhir abhito
niṣevye nitye tvām aham iti sadā bhāvayati yaḥ
kim āścaryam tasya triṇayana samṛddhim tṛṇayato
mahāsamvartāgnir viracayati nīrājana vidhim.

O Eternal One, attended on by the rays arising
from your body, representing psychic powers
such as atomicity—
For one who contemplates these in terms of oneself
It is no wonder that all the benefits of the three-eyed
one should only be worth rejection,
And that the fire of doom should perform for him the
light-waving rite.

The ritualistic supplicant of this verse gets a reward which is much more than what he could expect from the standpoint of usual Tantrism, when he is able to place himself before the absolute principle of these verses in keeping with the Advaitic attitude, in which the worshipper and worshipped are treated as interchangeable terms in the context of the Self and the non-Self. The tables are turned unexpectdly and completely in his favor, and the worshipper, instead of worshipping, is worshipped himself. Ordinarily, a believer in the efficacy of Tantric ritualism places himself before an image, which is thought of as a presence. By concentrating on this presence, the worshipper will begin to participate in certain values radiating from the body of the Goddess, represented by the image being worshipped.

Favors are involved in all worship, except the Vedantic one. Such favors could include very base ones, such as praying for the defeat of a particular enemy, or praying for riches, not to speak of attracting women in order to make them obedient to one's wishes. These are lesser benefits which could apply, at best, to one or other of the two schools of Sakti worshippers in the context of *tantra, mantra* or *yantra*. They are the Kaulins

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and the Samayins, the former more left-handed or ordinary than the latter. Even if such worshippers should belong to the most respectable of Sakti cults, we cannot imagine them as aspiring for benefits which only Upanishadic wisdom could make them aspire for. Even groups of believers belonging to a very superior and intelligent order could be expected to pray for those psychic powers which emanate from the body of the Goddess worshipped, which are the eight classically enumerated *siddhis*, starting with *aṇima* (minuteness or atomicity).

The Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems of Indian Philosophy begin with the *paramāṇu* (an infinitesimal particle or atom), and not the Absolute, as the first category of significance in their system. We have a series of other values which could be built up in an ascending order with this atomic particle reality as its starting point. Smallness would suggest at once bigness. *Brahman* is neither big nor small, but both at once. Lightness and heaviness can also be treated as the next pair in this ascending series of benefits known to anterior schools, lesser than what Vedanta represents, as the final crowning position among other psychic powers which are classically recognized and are mentioned even in the *Amarakośa* lexicon. They are not particular to the Tantric world but acceptable to Indian Philosophy in general.

In the first line of this verse, Devi's body is represented as the seat from where these psychic powers radiate, as their common source. They are like graded rays of light covering a broad spectrum of benefits which the worshipper can acquire for himself by continued meditation upon her. Such powers are the highest point to which an aspirant who is thinking of some kind of success in this world, which will make him important in the eyes of his fellow men, would normally expect to attain. This would apply to one who has not risen to a consciousness of the need for detachment or renunciation—as is normal to an aspirant for knowledge, and emancipation through it, as proper to the Upanishadic ideal—and would lead him into the world of personal benefits, which at best would only apply to some form of success in the public eye. The world beyond would be excluded, and although the gates of heaven might be open to him, the gate of salvation would be closed against him. One has to be able to contemplate values originating from the person

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of the Goddess, not only of a bodily order, but from a presence that combines and cancels physical and metaphysical values into the unitive terms of one Absolute Value. The psychic powers are attendant on the person of the Goddess, biased somewhat on the physical rather than the psychic side of the personality. The prayer is thus for unilateral benefits which are only applicable to life here and not to the hereafter.

The fully instructed Advaita Vedantin, however, is able to take the revised position indicated in the second line. He does not think at all of psychic powers that will enhance his value as a spiritual man in this world. He takes the bolder and more correct stand of Vedanta, which gives primacy to the *ātman*, the Self rather than to miscellaneous benefits, however rare, such as the *siddhis*. He thinks of establishing an equation with himself as one pole, with the absolute eternal Goddess as the counterpart. Thus, in terms of Self (*ātman*) there is established a bipolar participation between its further subdivisions, which are here the Self of the devotee and the Self that the Goddess represents. When these attain to homogeneity of status by continued contemplative wisdom disciplines, in keeping with Upanishadic teachings, there is no violation of any principle if we should turn the tables to say that the worshipper becomes himself worshipable to his own non-Self counterpart. Any one of the *mahāvākyas* can do this trick of turning the tables completely in favor of the worshipper. When such a radical change takes place the Vedantic supplicant would not any more be attracted by benefits for himself, however great, which even Siva, on the numerator side of the gods, could deign to confer on him. It is not the body, but the positive counterpart, the body of the Goddess represented by Siva, that can confer other-worldly benefits which are more spiritual than benefits proper to the body of the Goddess herself. These latter concern only the ontological Self, as *siddhis* that apply to life here. There is a corresponding series of these psychic gifts of a more spiritual order, which Siva can confer on behalf of Devi from his own non-Self side. They have a one to one correspondence with the former series, starting with minute particles, which still refer to matter only. The benefits from Siva can range upward instead of downward. He is interested in conferring salvation and not heaven.

11

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The third line therefore rightly underlines that the intelligent Advaitin will not care for anything less than salvation, which is far beyond heaven. If by mistake Siva should confer a benefit within the scope of heavenly values, the superior and proud Advaitin would naturally reject it, and one should not be surprised if he does so. He prays for no sugar-coated benefits, but wants the last benefit of all, on the positive side at the omega point, which is that intense zone where the powers of doomsday are concentrated, possibly at the top of the crown of Siva himself. It is that tragic doom that he prays for, not any benefit at all, and, when he takes such an absolute and firm position, the man able to take such a radical decision himself becomes the equal counterpart of what that doom represents. Instead of waving lights to the presence of Devi, which includes the doom of Siva—when looked upon as representing her full stature of combined bodily and mental aspects together—the Self of the worshipper attains to such an exalted dignity that the numerator doomsday fire would wave its lights to propitiate the denominator side, represented by the full-fledged Advaita Vedantin supplicant. Self and non-Self, in a word, are interchangeable in the highest context of Advaita.

Annotations

The words "attended on by" *(niṣevye)* mean that the *siddhis*, or psychic powers, are not intrinsically of the nature of the Goddess, but are of the nature of epiphenomena. This phrase clearly states that the *siddhis* are like servants to the Goddess. The Absolute Goddess is not directly interested in conferring *siddhis*. To pray for them is not respectable enough in her eyes.

The reference to the "Eternal One" is intended to mark the transition from a lower goddess, represented as being within the scope of the three *guṇas*, to one who is more eternal and independent of time and place.

The phrase "in terms of oneself" *(aham iti)* constitutes the pivot around which the turning of the tables may be said to take place. The Self and the non-Self are involved directly here, without the question of benefits coming to the mind at all. The natural pride of a superior Advaitin would make him reject the highest of benefits of a hedonistic order, because without

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renunciation the Self-realization which is the only benefit of Vedanta cannot accrue to anyone. The three-eyed Siva is still a divinity to be propitiated, and not the complete counterpart of the devotee's own Self, when fully abstracted and generalized. Further, it is to be understood here that when subjected to abstraction and generalization the deity loses his theological status and becomes the counterpart of the Self of the supplicant, who cancels himself out in the totality of the unity of the Absolute.

The reference to the "fire of doom" *(samvartāgni)* is intended to match the top limit of a numerator value against the bottom limit of a denominator value, as its counterpart, implied in the person of the supplicant himself.

In conclusion, we have shown how the structural and methodological requirements are seen to be fully respected here. Inversion, one to one correspondence, Self / non-Self dialectics, theological worship—both in ascending and descending order, also with one to one correspondence between them— and above all, how hedonistic values are only worth rejection, are all to be noted here as being conducive to Sankara's task of revaluating Tantric worship in terms of a full-fledged Advaitic one, which is seen to be clearly undertaken in this and many other verses of this series.

We reproduce here some interesting definitions of *siddhis* from the *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* of Monier Williams:

siddhi: The acquisition of supernatural powers by magical means or the supernatural faculty so acquired (the eight usually enumerated are given in the following sloka:
aṇimā laghimā prāptiḥ prākāmyam mahima tatha
īśitvam ca vaśitvam ca tathā kāmāvaśāyita;
sometimes 26 are added, e. g. *dūra-śravaṇa, sarvajñatva, agni-stambha,* & c)

1. *aṇimā:* the superhuman power of becoming as small as an atom.
2. *laghimā:* a kind of *siddhi* or supernatural faculty of assuming excessive lightness at will.
3. *prāpti:* the power of obtaining everything.
4. *prākāmya:* irresistible will or fiat.

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5. *mahimā:* the magical power of increasing size at will.
6. *īśitva:* superiority, supermacy, one of the eight attributes of Siva.
7. *vaśitva:* the supernatural power of subduing to one's own will, mastery of one's self, self-command.
8. *kāmavaśāyin:* the power of suppressing desire (one of the eight supernatural faculties of Siva).

dūra-śravaṇa: hearing from afar

sarvajñatva: omniscience

agni-stambha: the (magical) quenching of fire.

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catuḥ ṣaṣṭyā tantraiḥ sakalam atisandhāya bhuvanam
sthitas tat tat siddhi prasavaparatantraiḥ paśupatiḥ
punas tvan nirbāndhād akhila puruṣārthaika ghaṭanā-
svatantram te tantram kṣititalam avātītarad idam.

By sixty-four knowhow factors, each capable of generating
its own overt psychic power,
Transcending the whole world while remaining immobile,
The Lord of Beasts, again by your insistence, by that free
expertness of yours,
Caused this firm earth to be brought down for the unified
fulfilment of all life purposes.

This verse has given room for much speculation among authorities on Tantra. The edition of Sir John Woodroffe, that of Professor W. Norman Brown of Harvard, and the one by Theosophical scholars S. Subrahmanya Sastri and T. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar have all been consulted by the present author in order to fix the meaning of the reference here to the sixty-four *tantras*. None of these English editions are able to give an adequate explanation of this notion. Neither do the Malayalam editions of orthodox pandits of Kerala—where Tantrism has traditionally prevailed—like that of G. S. Srinivasa Iyer of Palghat or that of K. Mahadeva Sastri of South Travancore, shed any light on the obscurity of this reference. Srinivasa Iyer even says that this reference must allude to degenerate schools which are not influenced by the Vedas, but this cannot be taken into consideration by us at all. Various doubtful enumerations of these sixty four items suggested in other books reveal at first glance that they refer to disreputable benefits which could be considered as subdivisions of the eight main hedonistic items of benefit called the *siddhis*, with their counterparts, which we learned to recognize in the previous verse. Eight plus eight would make sixteen normally, but it is permitted to think of further ramified subdivisions

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of the same, such as 8x8=64, which could be divided into 32 upward and 32 downward radiating rays. This division into 32+32 fades away into unimportance if we treat Siva and Sakti as making up one unit which includes both the plus and the minus aspects. Whatever the content of these sixty four items, it is enough for us to know that they are either of a positive or of a negative order. The Kaulins, the Samayins and the other schools that think in terms of psychic benefits could fill the content of these sixty four items as they like, according to the value systems that they are committed to. What is more important for us is to see the structural features and their dynamism in the broadest of outlines, so that, interested as we are in Sankara's revalued version of all Tantric schools, we can get an idea of what Sankara himself is interested in, rather than what an endless number of anterior Tantric experts might have left behind in the form of a veritable forest of literature.

Viewed from this revised perspective, we can recognize certain features of the *modus operandi* of the powers of the mind that could be cultivated by any man, not as ends in themselves, but as coming within the scope of an overall Advaitic understanding of exoteric Tantrism, restated in terms as esoteric as possible to reveal to our view the structuralism and dynamism implied, in order to take us to a closer vision of the Absolute. One of the *siddhis* refers to making a man go to sleep in spite of himself. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa once remarked to a man who claimed to be able to walk across the river Ganges that this particular power only saved him a quarter anna (less than a penny) at the ferry. All the trouble he took in gaining the *siddhi* was therefore of negligible worth. The question of *siddhis*, therefore, is to be bypassed by us.

The third line of this verse reveals the delicacy of the regulating mechanism, which, like a cybernetic retroactive principle, operates at the very core of the setup in the functioning of these knowhow factors *(tantras)*. Siva here remains the agent for both the *svatantra* and *paratantra* functions of the sixty four factors which we are concerned with altogether in this verse. *Svatantra* and *paratantra* are technical terms meaning impulses of an ascending or descending order, referred to as "overt psychic powers" applying to Siva, and as "free expertness" applying to

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Devi. Although the functions are ambivalent, it is the linking parameter represented by the Siva principle that is the agent for the world to descend again after its dissolution anteriorly.

Thus, in the alternating process of creation and dissolution that takes place throughout eternity, the regulating principle is of a very subtle cybernetic order within the total mechanism. It keeps on establishing a cybernetic equilibrium between opposing tendencies so that life activities could have a chance to continue unhindered. This offers human beings a *terra firma* on which to stand and fight their various battles in fulfilment of their life purposes. According to the Hindus, there are mainly four benefits of human life, called the *puruṣārthas*. They are *dharma* (correct life expression), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (desirable items of fulfilment) and *mokṣa* (salvation).

Cybernetics is familiar with this double-sided regulative principle, from which the very word is derived. This principle is a mechanistic parameter which passes through the details of the complex horizontal mechanistic aspects of the machine itself. The parameter itself does not act but, like a catalytic agent, it causes the subtle conditions favorable to both action and retro-action. Such is the two-sided regulating mechanism to be recognized as belonging to Siva. Pārvati has an equally subtle function which is referred to here as insistence only, and not as interference, countering what her husband has sanctioned in principle. The thermostat, so to speak, automatically changes its phase by the simple insistence of the Goddess, exerted equally subtly on the functioning of the cybernetic parameter, to create retroaction rather than action. If Siva's action points upward to the dissolution of the universe, then Devi's retroactive function makes the world descend into existence once again, as if by her magic touch. A split-second activity is to be imagined here, and the resulting universe instantly created and recreated affords humanity a sufficiently firm ground, upon which men could fight their battles or fulfil life purposes according to each man's desire or necessity.

The "unified fulfilment" in the last line cancels the multiplicity of the sixty-four items of intelligence *(tantras)* in the first line. *A priori* synthesis and *a posteriori* analysis belong together within the scope of the Absolute. Siva's function is

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analytic, while Devi's function is synthetic and *a priori*. The analytic function leads through thinner and thinner nominalism to nothingness on the positive side, but, as the Lord of Beasts, Siva does not lose his ontological foothold. It is at this point that the negative principle intervenes, and retroaction succeeds in bringing the nominalistically evaporated world back into reality again for the fulfilment of pragmatic life purposes. When life purposes are treated together they form one bundle at the source of life, like a sheaf of corn tied together. The terms *svatantra* and *paratantra*, which we have translated as "free expertness" and "overt psychic power" respectively, bring up the two limits of the amplitude within which cybernetic information circulates, establishing equilibrium, positively or negatively, as required, for the overall benefit of mankind. As parents of the universe, both Siva and Pārvati are interested in keeping the game going.

The Sanskrit expression *tat tat siddhi prasava paratantraiḥ*, which we have translated as "each capable of generating its own overt psychic power," not only clearly states that the psychic powers are the subject matter here, but also suggests, with the word *prasava*, a positive process of becoming. *Paratantra* also points to a transcendental rather than an immanent value. As against this *paratantra*, we have its counterpart in the *svatantra*, which refers to a freedom in itself and for itself and not outside itself, because of the word *sva* which has a subjective immanent import. Each psychic power has its own source or origin on the plus side, where Siva's *tantra* is concerned. Individual expertness of this pluralistic kind does not apply to the domain of Devi, where it has the status of being bound together into one *(eka ghaṭanā)*. All these indications have been carefully taken into account for the corresponding words in English, in which we have avoided being too technical. We prefer a commonsense approach in the name of easy readability, without deflecting from the meaning of the Sanskrit as intended by the author. The expression *avātītarat* (caused to descend) still refers to the function of Siva. It is to her husband Siva that Devi is affiliated, without any dualism in their respective functions. Pārvati caused the world to come by insistence, but she will not take the initiative. Pluralism tends to refer to the numerator, unity to the

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denominator. Siva and Pārvati are participating in the vertical axis only. As the wife, Pārvati can function in a zone which is neither his nor hers—nor two together as a compromise, but as the same.

The Siva-Pārvati *samvāda* (dialogue) makes a pointed reference to the difference between *svatantra* (independent) and *paratantra* (dependent). She wants for herself the corresponding power which is negative in its essence. Devi says, "Tell me something of a relativistic and non-relativistic character representing a *tantra* (know-how factor) to counteract all the numerator *tantras* attributed to Siva." The *Vāmakesvara Tantra* contains a reference to just this counteracting factor of the parameter of Siva in terms of Devi's *svatantra*, which is absolutist in character.

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32

śivaś śaktiḥ kāmaḥ kṣitiratha raviś śītakiraṇaḥ
smaro hamsaś śakras tadanu ca parā māraharayaḥ
amī hṛlekhābhis tisṛbhir avasāneṣu ghaṭitā
bhajante varṇās te tava janani nāmāvayavatām.

Siva, Pārvati, Kāma and Earth—Sun, Moon,
God of Love, Swan and Indra—Para, Māra and Hari—
With these three sets with their heart-monomarks suffixed,
They adore your letters, Oh Mother, by way of naming your component limbs.

Some clarifications will be needed before the reader can enter into the spirit and full implications of Verses 32 through 35. We know that there were two schools of Tantrism called the Kauḷins and the Samayins. The Kauḷins were primarily interested in cultivating a form of absolutist delight or enjoyment through what they understood to be the ontological approach to the absolute Source of all delight. Those who practised this kind of eroticism were not necessarily influenced by the Vedas. They belonged to the ordinary stratum of society. Eating meat, drinking wine of some sort, and having sex experience were to be taken for granted in their lives. They did not feel any guilt in these matters. The Kauḷa school had two main subdivisions called "Purva Kauḷa" and "Uttara Kauḷa." Purva Kauḷins emphasized ontology more than the Uttara Kauḷins. We could imagine further subdivisions between them. In both, an actual girl of a good family was a necessary item in their ritualistic orgies, often conducted secretly in the basements of neglected temples. Although their starting philosophy was something concrete and tangible, they made every effort to rise from *yantra* to *mantra* through the medium or means of *tantra*.

In the South Indian School of Tantra, there is a convention of distinguishing divinities by certain syllables, such as *ha, sa, ka, la, hrīm* and *srīm, aim* and *klīm*. By convention each of

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these syllables stands for a *devata*, which is a divinity with a special function within the structural dynamic setup of the technique of *tantra, yantra* and *mantra* combined, well known by the overall, though rather vague, term of *tantra*. In the ritual worship of the Kauḷins, letters of the alphabet brought to their minds images of these phenomenal functionaries *(devatas)* in the universe, theological, cosmological or psychological. The first line of Verse 32 lists three distinct sets of such divinities. The letter *ka* represents Siva, *e* represents Sakti, *ī* represents Kāma (the God of Love) and *la* represents *kṣiti* (the Earth). These four form the first group. Then, Sun *(ravi)* as *ka*, Moon *(śītakiraṇa)* as *sa*, Smara (the God of Love) as *ka*, Swan *(hamsa)* as *ha*, and Indra as *la* form the second group. The third group consists of *sa, ka* and *la*, which represent Para, Māra and Hari respectively. When we suffix the letter *hrīm*, which represents the heart center, to each of these three groups, it is easy to recognize the favorite conventional fifteen-lettered *mantra* belonging to the *srīvidya* called the *pañcadaśākṣarī mantra*, which is made of the three sets, *ka, e, ī, la, hrīm; ha, sa, ka, ha, la, hrīm;* and *sa, ka, la, hrīm*. Thus we get a charm of fifteen divinities strung together into an imaginary rosary, and indicated by letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. If the divinities are used as monomarks for purposes of taxonomy, we could also say that the syllables stand for the same divinities understood nominalistically rather than realistically.

It is true that sometimes the sixteen-lettered *ṣoḍaśākṣarī mantra* is also conventionally understood. How the sixteenth letter is to be supplied is supposed to be a secret taught only by a guru, who will give it personally to a disciple. This must be due to its very abstract epistemological status. *Pañcadaśākṣarī mantra* and *ṣoḍaśākṣarī mantra* could be treated together under the same tendency to use letters of the alphabet to stand for *devatas* or divinities, each of whom has his own function in the total setup of the absolute Divinity or Principle of Beauty.

This particular school of Kauḷins, by intending to bring into proper perspective the total setup within the structure of the Absolute, could be said to be travelling from the "universal concrete," as in the actual girl, to the utmost limit of nominalism by attempting to raise themselves through *akṣaras*. *Akṣara* means

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values resulting from the fusion of the alpha and omega in the alphabet of any language, *a*, being the starting vowel and *kṣa* being the last consonant in Sanskrit. *Akṣamāla* means a rosary of beads, which, when understood in the context of Rudra (Siva), is called a *rudrākṣmāla*. In Verse 33 also, the same kind of values are strung together into two rosary-like formations, one as an actual rosary of beads and another as a rosary of oblations of clarified butter derived from the celestial cow.

In this verse we can see clearly how Sankara is thinking of this *pañcadaśākṣarī mantra* of the *srī vidya*. The tendency of the Kaula Tantra, as we have said, is to ascend from the realistic upward towards the nominalistic, with iconographic divinities used as monomarks which have corresponding lettered syllable combinations with a one to one correspondence between the monomarks and their names more symbolically understood. Evidently the pre-Vedic Kaula school of erotic Tantrism is the subject of this verse. The overall purpose that Sankara wants to recognize as the *raison d'etre* of this kind of Kaula Tantrism is to meditate realisticatlly on the Goddess of Absolute Beauty, first with monomarks and finally with names applied to each element that might contribute to the beauty significance that Devi here is meant to represent. It is important to give a name as well as a function to each component element so that the totality might effectively loom into the contemplation of the worshipper, whatever school he might incidentally belong to. Even a wrong worship could be made right by the light of its correct intentionality, according to the Bhagavad Gita (IX: 29-31). God accepts everything, according to the caliber of the man. The attitude concerning worship is a catholic one. A man is saved by his intentions only, for his actions in this world may not have amounted to anything, due to uncontrollable circumstances.

The three sets of *devatas* in this verse have each to have the syllable *hrīm* suffixed. The heart is a center which is both a monomark and also something that can be understood by a syllable. It is easy to see the need for suffixing the heart monomark, because the heart refers back to the Self at the center of one's own consciousness, to which all things must refer.

When we add the letter *m* at the end of a syllable like *hrīm*, we are reminded of the syllable *aum*, which also ends in *m*. The

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letter *a* of *aum* is an open sound, the letter *u* is a half open sound, while the letter *m* is fully closed. The syllable composed of these three letters suggests the base, sides and apex of a triangle respectively, within the totality called Absolute Beauty, or Absolute Value significance in human life. We are asked in this verse to recognize three rosary-like garlands adorning the totality of the structure of the Goddess. Between the open syllable and the closed syllable there is implied a cancellation between horizontal and vertical values. When we are able to properly place the three sets indicated as complete garlands within the total frame of reference represented by Devi here, we could be expected to have understood her total Value under three main sets of categories, making up fifteen elements, each based on monomarks and spelled out by letters of the alphabet.

Sometimes a sixteen-lettered charm or *mantra* is seen to be mentioned in textbooks of Tantra. The sixteenth letter is supposed to be a secret one, summing up or cancelling out into a total value having an absolutist status. This final touch cannot be imparted except by a personal guru, acting as an intermediary. We do not propose to enter into the intricacies of such esoteric technicalities (of which there is no end). The reader is referred to other esoteric books, such as *The Śākta Upaniṣads* and the *Śivānanda Lahari*, both published by the Theosophical Publishing House.

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smaram yonim lakṣmīm tritayam idam ādau tava manor-
nidhāyaike nitye niravadhi mahābhogarasikāḥ
bhajanti tvām cintāmaṇiguṇanibaddhākṣavalayāś-
śivāgnau juhvantas surabhighṛta dhārāhutiśataiḥ.

Smara (Eros), Yoni (Source), Lakshmi (Wealth)—first prefixing this triplet to your *mantra,*
Oh Lone and Eternal One, innumerable enjoyers of great ecstasy
Adore You, telling rosary beads of philosopher's stones, ever sacrificing into the fire of Siva
With hundreds of oblations from the celestial cow, streaks of clarified butter.

It is not difficult to see that this verse is dealing with the Samayins because there is reference to the sacred cow *(kāmadhenu)* and the Vedic ritual of the fire sacrifice *(śivāgni)*. We are called upon to make two degrees of abstraction in order to grasp the meaning of the situation described. We have to think of spoonfuls of ghee derived from a celestial cow being poured thousands of times into a fire. In performing this ritual act, the spoon which contains the ghee circulates a thousand times in the hands of the Vedic votary. When abstracted, this circulation will resemble a rosary, but with the ghee as its value factor instead of the usual rosary such as one made of *rudrākṣa* beads which is natural to the context of Siva worship. The word *akṣa* is made up of the first and last letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. An *akṣamāla* is a rosary, with the help of which votaries of divinities—whether in India or elsewhere—repeat mystical syllables, each representing a divinity, symbol or mono-mark. Instead of *a* and *kṣa*, one could think of alpha and omega. *Akṣamāla*, then, is a rosary consisting of some sacred items of value in the form of a "universal concrete," but derived from letters or syllables made up of signs of the alphabet. The first and the last, when fused together, would represent a value resulting from the reciprocal cancellation of counterparts.

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If Verse 32 was nominalistic in its intention to name the various limbs of the Goddess in order to understand her both realistically and in an abstract form, then the intention of this verse tends to be hedonistic. Ancient Vedism was characterized by its love of "the good life". The drinking of soma juice and the sacrificing of calves to propitiate one god or another was a natural form of behavior to the Aryans. Later Vedism, however, began to eschew the infliction of suffering (*himsa*) and the shedding of blood as impure and unvirtuous. The Buddhist and Jaina doctrine of *ahimsa* (nonhurting) must have had its share in shaping this revised way of life through the ages. Whatever their historical origin might be, Brahmins of the present day, at least in South India, do not lend support to those items which are distinguished as *vāmacāra* ("left-handed") features of Tantrism. As a dialectical revaluator, Sankara evidently wishes to recognize the claims of both the Samayins and the Kaulins by treating them as representative rivals schools and accepting what is laudable in each of them, so as to present them both without partiality, but in a form slightly revised and restated. By this unitive approach, both these forms of prevailing spirituality can be brought into line with his own fully Advaitic standpoint. The Bhagavad Gita even speaks of the Vedas as being under the sway of the three *guṇas* (*traiguṇya viṣayā vedā*), (II: 45).

Hedonism, relativism, ritualism and negativism are not defects in themselves, but they are capable of being revised in the name of a fully unitive absolutist standpoint. Clarified butter and the wish-fulfilling cow of heaven, Kāmadhenu, are natural to the Brahminical world of values. Pouring ghee into a "Siva fire" instead of into a "Brahman fire" is to be understood as a slight concession made in this verse to the Siva-Sakti context of South India, to which Tantrism must necessarily belong. There is no Tantrism that can be called purely Vedic, and the conflict between Vedism and Tantrism is clearly evident in many parts of pre-Vedic Tantric literature, as revealed in the writings of Sir John Woodroffe and others. If Verse 32 represents an ascending movement from the actual or "universal concrete" to nominalism through conventional syllables applied to divinities used as monomarks, in the interest of taxonomy or nomenclature of the various aspects of the Goddess, then the movement in

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Verse 33 is clearly one of descent from the value represented by the celestial cow toward actual benefits here on earth, in the name of *bhoga*, or enjoyment. By clarifying or enhancing the path of hedonism, Sankara here refers to *bhoga* in revised terms, as *mahābhoga* is not so, because the word *mahā* (great) lifts its meaning to the status of *sub specie aeternitatis*, "under the scope of the eternal," thus taking off any stigma that might be attached to *bhoga* as a brute reality in life. In other words, *mahābhoga* is not to be treated as just *bhoga*.

Verses 32 through 35, when read together in the structural perspective we are presenting, reveal two opposite movements—between positive and negative counterparts—in the context of the scrutiny, analytic or synthetic, of the same high value of Absolute Beauty which is always the subject matter or object matter of these verses. When we give primacy to effect, as in Verse 34, a new novelty is introduced into beauty. When we give primacy to cause, as in Verse 35, our reference is to the source of all things, already existing in the past. The double movement implied in these four verses taken together will be progressively abolished in purer epistemological terms of nondual cancellation. In the coming verses, which refer to the actual *cakras* such as *ājña* and so on, we will find the principles of compensation, reciprocity and complementarity, (or milder forms of ambivalence and parity), presented in a certain epistemological and methodological sequence by Sankara. Verses 32 through 35 are meant to reveal the structural dynamism before the same stands revealed in its fully revalued Advaitic form, from Verse 36 onward.

"Samaya" is the conventional name applied to the Vedic goddess as implied in the revised Tantric context, while the term "Kaula" would suggest a more popular approach to the Tantrism of pre-Vedic times. On final analysis, whether we employ an ascending or a descending dialectical approach it is the same *srī cakra* that is implied in both the movements, positive and negative. Advaita Vedanta does not admit of any duality between part and whole, cause and effect, substance and attribute. Unitive vision, at whatever level, refers to one and the same *brahman*, and all references to higher or lower *brahman* have to be left behind when the doctrine is to be stated in its finalized form.

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What is gained on one side is lost on the other, as between transcendental and immanent values, leaving behind a constant always to be understood under the aegis of the same Absolute Selfhood. Neither epistemological, methodological, nor axiological duality is to be allowed to taint even in the least, the status of the nondual Absolute. That is the requirement of Sankara's position as an Advaita Vedantin. Narayana Guru endorses this in Verse 60 of his *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam:*

Even when knowledge, to egoism is subject, in any predication
And one is unmindful of the ultimate verity of what is said,
Yet as with the truth however ultimate, such knowledge
Can never fall outside the scope of the knowing Self.

The language of abstraction and generalization has various degrees and dimensions, always within the scope of the gross, the subtle, and causal and "the fourth" *(sthūla, sūkṣma, kāraṇa, turīya)*, the four states of consciousness as described in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. Hedonistic motives might be reprehensible ordinarily, but, as we have pointed out already, the qualification *mahā* added to *bhoga rasikāḥ*, which all together means "lovers of great delight," absolves the devotee from any charge of hedonism. And when the duality between ends and means is abolished, his worship becomes at least as dignified as the kind of worship envisaged in the previous verse.

In these two verses, 32 and 33, Sankara succeeds in revaluing and restating both Kaulin and Samayin ways of worship without detracting anything from either of them, by giving them their full status in the light of the intentionality natural to Advaita Vedanta. If intentions are good, the actions themselves have also to be good necessarily, according to the doctrine of the Bhagavad Gita (IX. 31). There Krishna says, "My disciple will never perish, because his intentions are good." This doctrine of grace is the most touching thing a god can say to a human being. This is not found in Buddhism. If you are dedicated to *brahman* (the Absolute), ends and means will cancel out by your intention.

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34

śarīram tvam śambhoḥ śaśimihira vakṣoruhayugam
tavātmānam manye bhagavati navātmānam anagham
ataḥ śeṣaś śeṣīty ayam ubhayasādhāraṇatayā
sthitas sambandho vāṃ samarasa parānanda parayoḥ.

You are the body of Siva, having the sun and the moon for
twin breasts;
Your self, I surmise, Oh Goddess, is a new sinless self for him;
Therefore, by mutual complementarity, this relation remains
one of common reciprocity
Between you two, participating on equal terms of transcendent
bliss.

Verses 34 and 35 require a special epistemological and methodological approach before they could make normal meaning to the modern reader. It is only in the light of modern phenomenology or of "intentionality," as understood in the philosophy of Brentano, that we can give even a barely justifiable meaning to these two verses. Phenomenological terms like "noetic", "noematic" and "eidetic presentiments" are the only notions in modern philosophy which resemble the treatment that Sankara adopts here. There are different degrees of abstraction and generalization implied when we represent an object, pronounce a judgment about it, or evaluate it. Siva, as understood here, is only a thin mathematically understood entity without any concrete or tangible body of his own. The very first verse of this work presupposes this, when it states that Siva is incapable even of pulsation without being joined with his own counterpart, Śakti. If mathematics has a teleological status at the positive limit of the vertical parameter, then ontology could be said to mark a point lower down in the vertical scale of intentions or values. Viewed in the light of such a perspective, there is no duplication or conflict between any rival bodies, as between those of Siva and Pārvati.

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We suggest that Verses 34 and 35 be scrutinized together because we find a secondary goddess introduced in the latter one. The first goddess, of Verse 34, has the status of parity with the numerator value called *Śambhu* (Siva), while the secondary goddess, found in Verse 35, is not an equal to Siva in the same sense, but prefers to be his wife in a more negatively feminine manner. In reading both these verses, we have to keep in mind four degrees of abstraction and generalization. Sex might be a "fact truth", but it is not a "logic truth". Similarly, the relationship between "Sivahood" and "Pārvatihood" could have a parity or ambivalence, a complementarity, a reciprocity, or a compensation, consistent with the four degrees of abstraction and generalization, which we could summarily distinguish as the first, second, third and fourth dimensions, based on the principle of quaternion. We have had occasion to explain this principle many times elsewhere, as in our *Search for a Norm in Western Thought*.[1] Basically, these four dimensions are not different from the four states of consciousness described in the Upanishads. The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* calls them *sthūla* (gross), *sūkṣma* (subtle), *kāraṇa* (causal) and finally *turīya* (the fourth) which has a fully absolutist status. The numerator aspect has to be further distinguised from its own denominator aspect, because there is a tragic line that separates name and form (*nāma-rūpa*) which correspond to conception and perception respectively. These epistemological, methodological and axiological considerations have to be remembered together, if some of the major enigmas of these two verses are to be clarified. We could put our finger on each of the ten distinct enigmas in these two verses taken together. The first seven are in Verse 34:

1. "You are the body of Siva." (*śarīram tvam śambhoḥ*)

Siva has only a thin mathematical status, placed as he is at the extreme positive (omega) limit of the total situation to be kept in mind here. Thus at a lower level, tending to be ontological rather than teleological, we are asked here to think of a goddess who still has a hypostatic or positive dignity attached to her body. Such a body is not to be treated as physical in the ordinary sense, but may be said to belong to the world of

1. A Gurukula publication.

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intentionality, whether objective or subjective. Such notions are also found in phenomenology as in the terms "noetic," "noematic" and "eidetic presentiments". The body of Siva has, therefore, an epistemological status of its own.

2. "Sun and moon for twin breasts." *(śaśi mihira vakṣoruha yugam)*

The sunlight and the moonlight of the spring and summer, both have their respective parts to play in making a tree put forth its fresh sprouts or blossoms. How the sun and moon cooperate in such a task has to be intuitively imagined, as when we understand that the twilight periods of both sun and moon, rising or setting through the 360-odd days of the year, are likely to have some kind of psycho-chemical influence in the growth and metabolism of a human being, especially in a woman. The breasts of the Goddess represent the source of life for all children born anywhere anytime. There is, then, nothing too far fetched implied when it is suggested here that the breasts of the Goddess are derived from the two celestial sources of light that we call the sun and the moon, which weave a logarithmic spiral within the individual mind or psycho-physical setup, contributing to the status of the person of the Goddess.

The sun dominates the active daytime, while the moon is most beautiful in its thinnest crescent-like virtuality, presiding over the subconscious innate world of dreams and reveries. We have already indicated that if we should abstract and generalize the twilights of the sun and moon rising or setting together, we could derive a vertical parameter as a reference for the alternating influences of sun and moon on the consciousness of the contemplative. When fitted into the overall scheme in terms of a logarithmic descending spiral, it would be possible to justify this reference as implying both a horizontal parity and a vertical reciprocity between them.

It is important for the revised structuralism proper to the value of Beauty, as presented by Sankara after his revaluation of Kaulin and Samayin Tantric traditions (in Verses 32 and 33), that the breasts of the Goddess do not have merely an earthy reference. This kind of revaluation was also clearly underlined in Verse 19.

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3. "A new and sinless self." *(navātmānam anagham)*

In this verse we are still thinking of the numerator aspect of the personality of the Goddess. If cause is old, effect is new. Causes have a negative ontological reference and effects have, on the contrary, a positive hypostatic or teleological reference. To give a very concrete example, a mango tree displays fresh reddish green sprouts every year in the flowering season. This tender magenta foliage could be compared to the new body rising out of the old body that the tree would otherwise represent. It is the new side, which is an effect in the personality of the Goddess, that is to be understood here. If we now ask what about the old aspect of the same parsonality which is on the denominator side of the cause and not the numerator effect side, the answer will be found in the very next verse which views the same complementary, reciprocal, and compensatory relationship in a revised and more negative perspective.

Sin is always associated with things that are of "earth earthy". Concepts cannot be associated with sin because sin can adhere only in the world of percepts. In this sense, the hypostatic aspect of the Self of the Goddess, or anybody else, has to be thought of as removed from all taint of sin.

4. "By mutual complementarity." *(śeṣaḥ śeṣī)*

The complementarity referred to here could be only between the higher body having a thin mathematical status and the more actual body of Pārvati though still hypostatic, pure, or celestial. As between any two levels in the vertical parameter, there must be a complementarity between the positivity and the negativity implied between them. But in the next verse there is another complementarity between two denominator aspects of the same principle of Absolute Beauty which is neither male nor female, nor both indifferently.

5. "Relation of common reciprocity" (*ubhaya sādhāraṇata*)

The original expression in Sanskrit is *ubhaya sādhāraṇatayā*. *Ubhaya* means "participating both ways," and *sādhāraṇata* means "having a common feature." Our translation thus correctly corresponds to the meaning of the original Sanskrit.

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6. "Participating on equal terms." *(samarasa parayoḥ)*

The Sanskrit term *samarasa*, meaning "equality," sufficiently justifies our rendering.

7. "Transcendent bliss." *(parānanda)*

Bliss could be either immanent or transcecdent. Consistent with the numerator status of the two partners in this verse, we can see how transcendental bliss *parānanda* applies more aptly here than immanent bliss, which would properly belong to the context of the next verse.

The object of Sankara in Verses 34 and 35 will become all the more evident when we remember that he shuns the technicalities of Tantra and Yoga when they are used too conventionally and out of relation with the realities of everyday life. We even find the name of the *anāhata cakra*, which is evidently implied in Verse 38, to be omitted by Sankara. *Anāhata* means "not struck," and implies a state of nature. It does not, according to Sankara, call for a special technical term to distinguish it among the *cakras*. For the same reason, we find that Sankara does not have any use for the terms so inevitably used in Yogic and Tantric literature, such as *iḍa, piṅgaḷa* and *suṣumna*. Esotericism for its own sake, like scholasticism in European thought, only detracts from the scientific status of a work of the kind that Sankara intends this present one to be.

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manastvam vyoma tvam marud asi marut sārathir asi
tvam āpas tvam bhūmis tvayi pariṇatāyām na hi param
tvam eva svātmānam pariṇamayitum viśva vapuṣā
cidānandâkāram śivayuvati bhāvena bibhṛṣe.

You are the mind, the sky, the wind too, also the charioteer
of the winds;
You are the water as well as the earth—apart from your
manifest form, there is naught else indeed.
You, in order to manifest by your own self—taking
a universal form
Of mental bliss substantial—assume the role of Siva's young
bride and thus rule triumphantly.

Now, as we pass on to Verse 35, we have first to notice that there is a descending series of items, not necessarily elemental or physical in the ordinary sense, but tending to be psychophysical categories, to be understood as in the Bhagavad Gita (VII: 4), where it says that the mental factors participate with the elemental earthy factors in an imperceptible gradation of mutual interpenetration. Advaita cannot recognize any duality between matter and mind. The same vertical parameter has to pass through whatever series is supposed to make up a total personality, whether of a god or of a human being. The verse in the Gita gives an ascending series, but here it is a descending series with mind mentioned first. Slight variations in nomenclature or description would be found in the Upanishads or other contemplative texts, such as the eight "cities" (*puryaṣṭakam*) of Sankara's *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (Verse 96). The same kind of series of items can be found in endless variety in literature. What is important for us to note here is that beginning with mind, which is not physical, we are tracing stable entities or categories which fall along the line of a vertical decending parameter, terminating with a reference to earth, or *terra firma*, which is

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fully horizontal in its status. Here again, a logarithmic spiral between bases and apexes of triangles has to be kept in mind. The six levels are seen to be preserved intact in descending order, starting from mind and touching the lower limit of earth. A cancellation is implied at every level, where a stable equilibrium is to be attained between opposing forces. The lowermost limit of final cancellation is marked by the status of young wifehood conferred on Devi. Devi could be meditated upon at any level, suiting the temperament of the supplicant or votary concerned. Between the different levels, when properly cancelled out, no vestige of duality is supposed to exist either as the end of or as the means to correct contemplation of Absolute Beauty, which is always the same high value implied in each of the verses of this work. Whether we call each stable position a *cakra* (wheel), an *ādhāra* (a basis or foundation), a *mudra* (gusture), or a cancelled out value of *laya yoga*, is not important in Advaita Vedanta. *Haṭha yoga* could be viewed in the light of the same dynamism of cancellation. The principle of cancellation is thus at the basis of each of the verses, as also of this work as a whole. (This is not understood by the Vedantins of the present day who label Sankara as a *māyāvādin* without entering into the full spirit of his uncompromising speculation.) With this principle in mind let us take the remaining three enigmas contained in this verse:

1. "Apart from your manifest form, there is naught else indeed!" *(tvayi pariṇatāyām na hi param)*

This finalized description must refer to the various grades of horizontalization involved in the process of creation or becoming. A ripe mango can be said to have reached its final limit in the process of becoming mature, in itself, by itself and through itself. This process of becoming is not to be confused with the process of evolution as between different species of animals, which is another subject altogether. It is to be understood in the same sense that twilight can be seen as a maturation of the light of noontide. As everything has to be comprised within the scope of the two parameters, vertical and horizontal, the statement here that there is nothing left out of the picture is quite justified epistemologically.

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2. "Taking a universal form." *(viśva vapuṣā)*

Horizonal becoming has primacy in this verse over the vertical becoming of Verse 34. Pushing abstraction and generalization to its final limits to arrive thus at the notion of the horizontal parameter, always to be understood in just and proportionate relation with its own verticalized relational counterpart, gives us the universal form that is under reference here. Although it is to be understood philosophically, when applied to the personality of the Goddess for purposes of contemplation, it is not repugnant to the spirit of this verse to say that the Goddess became a pleasing and beautiful young wife for the sake of Siva, whose love must necessarily control and condition the universal form.

3. "You asume the role of Siva's young bride." *(śivayuvati bhāvena)*

It is of the essence of womanhood, which is negative in its import, to establish a reciprocity between the eternal feminine principle within herself and the eternal masculine principle, represented here, by Siva at the omega point. This reference, then, to a beautiful young bride triumphantly ruling at the opposite limit from that of Siva is quite justified.

The overall purpose of Sankara in composing these two verses, which do not refer to orthodox textbooks of Tantra or Yoga, is to prepare the mind of the student for an independent revalued version of these popular esoteric disciplines so as to bring them in line with his own Advaitic doctrine, for which he has stood consistently throughout his great commentaries. The difference between those commentaries and the present work consists in the fact that here Sankara employs a language in which, to use the terms of Marshall Mc Luhan, the "medium" and the "message" belong to the same epistemological order as interchangeable factors. Essence and existence, as the two main components of absolute Reality, could each be understood in terms of the other. When closely juxtaposed, they could verify each other and the resultant would be a normalized value factor which is here called Absolute Beauty. When such a beauty is experienced within the consciousness of the yogi, it conforms to the relational pattern represented by the *śrī cakra*. Whether we call stable states of contemplative meditation by the

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name *cakra*, *ādhāra* or even *mudra*, it is the same Absolute Value, without any taint of duality, and resulting from the cancellation of counterparts, that is always to be implied.

Sankara is evidently preparing the ground in order to bridge the gap between the meditative factors understood in the context of Tantra and the same factors understood in Yoga, to which series we shall arrive in the very next verse beginning with the *ājñā cakra*. The transition from Tantric factors of contemplation to Yogic ones could gain support from authoritative textbooks on Tantra or Yoga. That would be the more conventional way of understanding their significance. But Sankara, being a fully cultured Sanskrit scholar, refuses to lapse into the use of conventional cliches of esoteric textbooks. He prefers instead to rely on literature originating in the Upanishads, and passing through ideograms and iconographic monomarks known to poets like Kālidāsa and others before him, so as to bring them into correct and critically valid use in keeping with the Science of the Absolute *(brahmavidya)*. Vedanta becomes a system in his hands, as also a vision within the experience of yogis. We shall see that even in his treatment of the conventional *cakras* he employs his critical revaluation. His attitude in this work is the same as in the *Brahma Sūtras*, where the Sāmkhya tendency to schematize and categorize is not favored. Where reality is self-sufficient proof for the Absolute, to resort to schematization and categorization for their own sake only detracts from the realization of the Absolute.

The Yogi experiences beauty within himself. The artist gives it an overt representation in outer space. *Cakras* can belong to Tantra as well as to the world of *mantra* or *yantra*. Semiotic and syntactical processes also conform to the same structural dynamism. In the light of such a unified approach, it is possible to see how Sankara ably revalues not only semiotic processes (as in Verse 17), but also rival Tantric schools (in Verses 32 and 33), to bring all these disciplines in line with Yoga, itself understood nondualistically and without prejudices and hangovers belonging to its Sāmkhya origin. We have attempted to show that there is a common epistemology, methodology and axiology underlying these disciplines, which all belong to the same structural whole where categories and monomarks which

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have a relational togetherness of their own are referable to parameters or perimeters, vertical or horizontal.

It is lack of appreciation on the part of pandits and professors of this fully realistic yet non-dualistically valid approach to Absolute Beauty that has been responsible for scholars, even of of the stature of Professor Norman Brown of Harward, to doubt the very authorship of this work. It is difficult for them to see how an Advaita philosopher like Sankara could seem to lend support to Tantrism. Professor Brown (pp. 28-29) explicitly states this difficulty as follows:

> It does not seem to me possible to reconcile the teaching of the *Saundarya Laharī*, as I have sketched it, with the teaching of Sankara . . . . . worship is out of harmony with Sankara's teaching.

(This is not a text of worship, as Sankara tries to make clear both in the first and last verses of this work, as revealed in the words "one of ungained merit" *(akritapuṇyaḥ)* in Verse 1, and "by words Your own" *(tvadīyābhir vāgbhiḥ)* in Verse 100.)

We find that after these two verses, 34 and 35, where the new body and the wifely body of Pārvati are referred to, Sankara is able to refer to the conventional *cakras* one after another, beginning with the *ājña cakra* in Verse 36. In Verse 35 we see that he steers clear of any technical or conventional approach to the various levels ih the psychophysical setup. The dynamism of a contemplative Yoga, revised by him, is not to be fitted into the context of dualistic Sāmkhya but of what is proper to a full-fledged Advaitic standpoint of its own.

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INTRODUCTION TO VERSES 36 THROUGH 41

Verses 36 through 41 refer to stable psychophysical states of consciousness, conventionally named *cakras* in the discipline of Yoga. *Cakra* means "wheel". Sometimes we find the same states of synergic equilibrium called *ādhāra*, which would suggest a foundation or a basement. Fixing the psychophysical Self attentively on a certain type of syndrome or synergism, based on the cancellation of reciprocal functions, is also sometimes called *bandha*, which would suggest a knot or a binding force. There are *bandhas* of this kind known to Yogic practice, such as *mūla bandha* and *uḍyāṇa bandha*. Vital tendencies could be controlled and cancelled out through the regulation of breathing exercises, where again two opposite tendencies are intended to be neutralized. Each *cakra* or *ādhāra* represents a psychophysical point of equilibrium, attained at various levels of the dynamism between the Self and the non-Self.

The most characteristic description of yoga would be the word *nirodha*, which, in this context, means "restraint of the outgoing mental processes", which, through chains of natural associations, keep the mind distracted and wandering from one item of interest to another. Patanjali's definition of yoga is based on this basic concept of restraint *(nirodha)*, *(Yoga Sūtras*, 1:2). According to Patanjali, there are eight stages *(aṣṭānga)* by which a yogi practices the discipline of meditation (II:29). It begins with the lowest physical limit, where control is indicated by the word *yama*, meaning "withdrawal inward of tendencies." After *yama* comes *niyama* which applies to a slightly higher level of the personality, and which means "restraint or control conditioned by rules." Then comes *āsana* which refers to the correct posture for restraining the mind. *Prāṇāyāma*, the fourth stage in the process, refers to the regulation of the outgoing and incoming breaths, in order to subdue the vital tendencies which are at the basis of the function of breathing so that they do not

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obstruct the process, of meditation *(dhyāna)*, which is one of the stages to follow. The next stage of Patanjali's Yoga is *pratyāhāra* which is a negative process of withdrawal—from the side of the non-Self to the Self—of the outgoing tendencies. In *dhyāna*, or meditation, a first degree participation is established between the Self and the non-Self. *Dhāraṇa*, which is given as the sixth stage in the *Yoga Sūtras*, underlines a sustained state of *dhyāna*. Finally, the eighth stage is called *samādhi*. The word *sama* suggests equality and *dhi* suggests intellect. The intellect is thus expected to attain to a certain equality or equilibrium with itself. The cancellability of the Self and the non-Self is implied here.

When we think of the subject of Yoga in the context of Indian spirituality, the most canonical or authoritative textbook, which all correct scholars or practitioners have to keep in mind, is Patanjali's series of aphorisms called the *Yoga Sūtras*. Although Patanjali is thus an authority, his Yoga, which is sometimes also called *Rāja Yoga*, is considered defective in the full context of Advaita Vedanta. Patanjali's Yoga is not countenanced with favor in the *Brahma Sūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa, nor in the *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*, which is perhaps the latest authoritative textbook of Yoga. The *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha* contains an explicit disavowal of the *Aṣṭānga Yoga* of Patanjali, where Sri Rāma is asked by his Guru, Vasiṣṭha, to treat his own teaching as the final authority. Vasiṣṭha speaks in terms of *sapta bhūmikas*, or seven grounds of consciousness, which he defines elaborately in more than one place. The main objection to the Patanjali system of yoga, by Vedantic texts such as the Bhagavad Gita, is that its epistemology and methodology are necessarily vitiated by their being based on the Sāmkhya dualism of Kapila. In the thought of Kapila and Patanjali, and their respective schools of Sāmkhya and Yoga, there still persists a vestige of duality between *prakṛti* (Nature) and *puruṣa* (Spirit). This duality is essentially the same as that between matter and mind. Advaita, on the other hand, cannot tolerate even the slightest taint of duality between these two factors. The avowed purpose of Advaita is to abolish all duality whether between causes and effects, means and ends or between disciplines and their results. The fourth and fifth chapters of the Bhagavad Gita are specifically directed to the purpose of

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cancelling the duality between Sāmkhya and Yoga, and Verse 4 of Chapter 5 goes to the extent of saying that only children think they are distinct disciplines. Patanjali's Yoga itself has been commented upon by Vyāsa in what is known as the *Vyāsa Bhāṣya*, which is an attempt to abolish the duality which persisted as an implicit genetic element of error in Patanjali's original approach. The well known *Bhojavārtika* of Bhojaraja and the *Tattva Vaiśāradi* of Vācaspati Miśra pushed this revaluation still further, and Advaitic notions of Yoga have also been revised and made up-to-date in the writings of Sankaracharya and Narayana Guru.

It is true that the *Saundarya Laharī* refers in these six verses to what might seem at first sight to be six conventional *cakras*, *ādhāras* or *mudras*, each implying a stable attitude of the psycho-physical self. Ontological aspects, when implied, would justify the term *ādhāra*, while a teleological state of equilibrium would more properly be referred to as a *cakra*. The term *bandha* might apply to a discipline conceived under *haṭha yoga*, which refers to a very willful form of physical control and is only indirectly important to yoga, which should be properly understood from a more neutral standpoint. Some textbooks refer to four kinds of yoga: *mantra*, *laya*, *rāja* and *haṭha*. *Mantra* evidently refers to the muttering of magic syllables, while visualizing ideograms that belong to them. *Laya* does not depend upon the nominalistic aspects of yoga, but refers to an intimate form of merging the mind so as to dissolve the duality between object and subject. The term *rāja* is used in the Bhagavad Gita to underline a discipline in yoga which is public and experimentally valid, as when we say "the royal road." *Rāja yoga* thus corresponds to a normalized discipline of yoga, neither too esoteric nor too exoteric. We have already indicated the peculiarity of *haṭha yoga*. Whatever the type of yoga one might be interested in, there is always a subtle cancellation of counterparts implied, when yoga is treated as a discipline in the most general terms.

THE FRAME OF REFERENCE IMPLICIT IN THE CAKRAS

If yoga is a discipline that is to be practiced at all, it must necessarily have a status that is both physical and psychic at once. Space, whether subjective "inner space" or objective "outer space," is necessarily made up of various elements which

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must have a relational togetherness between them. If we try to think mathematically, this idea of the togetherness of inter-related elements would suggest to us a pattern which could be formally visualized as a "mathematical object," as Hilbert would call it. Whether that object is visualized in geometrical terms or merely conceived in terms of algebraic signs, the thing meant in itself cannot be different. The same thing could be viewed conceptually or perceptually. At the negative levels perceptual forms are natural to the mind. At positive levels conceptual relational togetherness or unity is also equally possible to think of as an idea. Letters of the Greek alphabet can be used to indicate points of intersection between lines. Just as a graph can verify a formula, so geometry can verify algebra. Modern cybernetics is based on this possibility: The machine language can be codified and decodified. Thus we arrive at the possibility of a relational frame of reference for all yogic meditations, however varied. This is, according to us, what Sankara suggests in his *śrī cakra* of Verse 11, though it is true that there the *śrī cakra* is presented in its statically conceived mathematical form as a ready-made cliche, so repugnant to the philosophy of Bergson. This does not mean, however, that Sankara is not aware of its dynamic version, as revealed in Verse 7. *Cakras, ādhāras, bandhas* or *mudras* are thus to be understood as stable points of an equilibrium that could be established within the amplitude of a parameter that we could postulate as existing between the lower alpha limit and the higher omega limit of a total situation proper to the world of Yogic discipline. What is true of Yogic discipline could be equally true of Tantric or semantic discipline by extrapolation or intrapolation, permissible by mathematical convention. The six *cakras*, having the names *ājña, viśuddhi, anāhata* (not mentioned by name), *svādhiṣṭhāna, maṇipūra* and *mūlādhāra*, conform to the conventionally understood stable centers (synergisms or syndromes), within the total psychophysical makeup of the individual.

Various textbooks on yoga define and describe these *cakras* or *ādhāras* with endless varieties of subtleties. To enter into these would be to court disaster through "confusion of tongues" in a verbose forest of words, otherwise known as "Babelization" in biblical language. In order to avoid falling into such a dire

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predicament, it is recommended that we steer our own speculation clear of the Scylla and Charybdis involved here.

We have already indicated that, as an Advaitin, Sankara could not countenance any dualistically tainted school of Yoga theory. Various questionable textbooks on Tantra esoterics refer to *cakras* and *ādhāras*, and describe them in terms of fires, or phalluses, or petals of different colors and numbers too numerous to enumerate, or even to examine cursorily. The voluminous writings of Sir John Woodroffe give us a sample of such material, to which could be added many others derived from schools of Tantrism, whether Bengali, Tibetan, or of the west coast of India, extending from Ujjain down to Kanyā Kumāri. For a complete list of the available works one is referred to the publication of Harvard University by Professor W. Norman Brown (pp. 99 ff) under what he called "Critical Apparatus."

We have carefully avoided entering into the deeper polemical controversies in the present study, in order to salvage this wonderful work from being lost within the ocean of verbosity, whose volume is still increasing as days pass by. In order to settle any controversy on such matters, it has once and for all been recommended in the Bhagavad Gita, in the words of Sri Krishna himself, that it is the canonical texts *(śāstra)* that are to be treated as authorities *(pramāṇas)*, (XVI: 24). *Guru vākya* (the word of the Guru) and *śāstra pramāṇam* (the authority of the canonical scriptures) are the two final touchstones for doctrinal validity or acceptability. For our own part, we have avoided getting lost in the bypaths of Tantrism or textbooks of Yoga, however much each might claim to be more secret or profound than another. Our enquiry would never come to an end were we to follow them.

We have used for reference two Upanishads which we have come across, one of which is called the *Saubhāgya lakṣmi* and the other the *Yogarāja*. The first is included in a translation of the *Śākta Upaniṣads* by Dr. A. G. Krishna Warrier, published by the Adyar Library. The second in the *Upanishad Samgraha*, published by Motilal Banarssi Das, New Delhi. The very fact that these two texts claim to be Upanishads must be sufficient guarantee that they are fully acceptable to Vedantins. What is more, both of them use the word *brahma cakra* or *brahma randhra*,

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thus bringing into the picture the notion of the Absolute, which is a sure indication that the context is that of the Absolute and not any other lesser discipline, such as that of Kapila, Kanada, or Gautama. Tantrism, which gives primacy to the Goddess, would not normally speak of *brahmarandhra* either.

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tavājñā cakrastham tapanaśaśikoṭi dyutidharam
param śambhum vande parimiḷita pārśvam paracitā
yam ārādhyan bhaktyā raviśaśi śucīnām aviṣaye
nirāloke'loke nivasati hi bhāloka bhuvane.

I adore that Siva ultimate, placed in your *ājñā cakra*, shining with the brilliance
Of millions of suns and moons, whose sides are illumined by the light of Supreme Consciousness,
Whom, worshipping with devotion, lifted beyond the reach of the sun, moon or fire,
In that shining domain above all need, one lives indeed in that bright world of light.

Hardly any tangible item or aspect of beauty, whether in terms of line, light or color, is suggested in this verse, which refers to the first and the foremost of *cakras* (basic wheels), to be placed at the positive limit of the vertical parameter. Boundless light seems to be the only factor that is specially underlined in this verse. There are references to the sun, moon and fire, as also to transcending worldly necessities or evils. Transcendence has unmistakable primacy over immanence here. A fluorescent form of brilliance is referred to, which seems to adorn two sides of the vague and almost mathematically pure figure that is intended to emerge into view after one has read this verse as a whole. The Absolute can be viewed both in its immanent and transcendent glory, at one and the same time. Between immanence and transcendence we could imagine degrees of reciprocity, complementarity or compensation. Even when numerator factors predominate over denominator factors, or vice versa, it is still possible to perform that final operation proper to the highest intuitive faculty of the mind, in which the full cancellation of counterparts could take place. Even the distinction between the lower and the higher *brahman* becomes

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abolished in the light of such a cancellation. Although incidentally examined here under the aegis of "the willing center" *(ājña)*, the content, at whatever center it might be, has to remain the same. It is always a foregone conclusion in Advaita Vedanta that there should not be any internal or external difference concerning a finalized notion of the Absolute when considered in itself, by itself, for itself and through itself. The lowest *cakra*, *mūlādhāra*, and the highest *ājña* or *sahasrāra*, indicate only incidental attributes of the Absolute Substance which remains the same, whatever else might be subject to change. This is an epistemological presupposition fundamental to Advaita Vedanta which the reader should keep in mind as applicable to this or any other *cakra* to be described hereafter.

1. "Siva ultimate." *(param śambhum)*

Param means "ultimate." *Śambhum* is Siva. Siva represents an auspicious value, when he is not thought of as a mythological divinity of the Hindu pantheon. When the notion is pushed in the direction of the omega point of the vertical parameter, as high as the mind of a votary can reach according to his mental capacities, we attain to the status of a notion of the Absolute, which could be said to mark the thinnest mathematical point of absolute or general possibility to the mind of any man. Such a possibility exists in the human mind. Mathematics as a science could not have been developed without such a faculty being normal to human beings.

2. *"ājña cakra"*

As a convention in yogic literature, a "willing center" is generally referred to as being placed between the two eyebrows. The physical need not correspond strictly to the psychological monomark. We have to keep in mind only the overall structural implications here. Some texts might attempt to clarify the content of this center by using comparisons taken from a biological context, as when they refer to the petals of a lotus flower. Sometimes they use the language of polygons, which could refer to crystals, stars or even snowflakes. The points of the compass, whether 4, 8 or 16, could be referred to as rays or tips of petals, pointing upward or downward. The symbols of the *lingam* (phallus) and the *yoni* (womb) are also conventionally

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used to indidate protolinguistically the content of each center. The reader is asked to scrutinize the legend and chart in the Appendix to verify for himself the component elements that are meant to be included within each of these conventional centers. Also he should note there that the *Saubhāgyalakṣmī Upaniṣad* and the *Yogarāja Upaniṣad* have to be viewed complementarily in their description of the *cakras* in an ascending or a descending order, respectively. Whatever the order might be, the result of cancellation, as we have said, is meant to be the same nondual Absolute represented by the *srī cakra* in more static terms. It is meant to be merely a frame of reference. Dynamism could be introduced into this static relational pattern according to the intuitive imagination of gifted men of wisdom, whether philosopher *(manīṣin)* or poet *(kavi)*.

3. "Millions of suns and moons" *(tapana śaśi koṭi)*

The reference to innumerable suns and moons is to show that quantity does not count when higher generalities, in terms of points on a parameter, are involved. Zeros added to either side of a unit number, when they exceed six, tend to have a qualitative significance rather than a quantitative one. When the sun is placed at the omega point and fire at the alpha point, it is easy to locate the moon between them on the same parameter. The moon also figures below, in the third line. It has to occupy a real position between what is conceptual and what is perceptual, which would be the zero point.

Multiplication beyond the zero point is qualitative, beyond the perceptual grasp. It is lifted to the conceptual side. When children play, they are very intrigued with that. They will defeat the other fellow by this. A child will call another by a degrading name and then say, "I take it back," which cancels the original harm. His two statements are not of the same order. The first is actual but the second lifts the conversation to a conceptual status.

4. "Whose sides are illumined" *(parimiḷita pārśvam)*

At sunset sometimes one can see a cloud that is illumined from the opposite side. The silver lining of a cloud suggests the same kind of bilateral fluorescent light. *Iḍa* and *pingala*, which are the left and right nerve strands running from the

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lowest to the highest point, represent this aspect of the light of consciousness in yogic literature. Sankara avoids such technicalities, because structuralism itself could become a fetish in the hands of persons who are not adepts in using such language.

5. "Beyond the reach of sun, moon or fire" *(ravi śaśi śucīnām aviṣaye)*

The *ājñā cakra* under consideration here is evidently meant to refer to the positive or non-Self side of the Absolute. Pure mathematical concepts cannot be tainted by factors which belong to the necessary side of life. Fire, as we have said, marks here the zero point in the scheme. Being raised beyond the zero point is a sure guarantee that all items of necessity, suffering or sin have been left behind negatively and thus transcended. The reference to the "world of light" in which the votary lives is thus justified.

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viśuddhau te śuddha sphaṭika viśadam vyoma janakam
śivam seve devīm api śiva samāna vyavasitām
yayoḥ kāntyā yāntyāś śaśikiraṇa sārūpya saraṇer-
vidhūtāntar dhvāntā vilasati cakorīva jagatī.

In your *viśuddhi cakra*, crystal clear and sky-generating,
I adore Siva and the Goddess also, with a parity of status with Siva,
By whose combined streaming moonbeam-like fluorescence
With inner dross banished, like a female *cakora* the world hereunder shines.

In coming to Verse 37, we first note that it is meant to mark a position intermediate between the omega-point and the zero-point. The word *viśuddhi*, which means "purity" or "clarity," still suggests a transparency of the spirit. A distinction is made here between bursting or scintillating light and fluorescent light like that of moonbeams. Moonlight is supposed to be watery, because its light seems to be flowing vertically down into the lower half. The uniqueness of God at the omega-point is now seen to be compromised, and we find that the negative aspect of the situation, which belongs properly to the consciousness of the negative Self, is attributed to the consciousness of the female *cakora* (partridge). Without this peculiar literary device, it would be impossible to make the sky-generating light cancel out against its counterpart.

1. "Sky-generating" *(vyoma janakam)*

The numerator side of understanding refers to hypostatic factors, under which a sky could be legitimately included.

2. "Parity of status" *(samāna vyavasitam)*

Two personalities are seen to be introduced at this level. In the text, the phrase *samāna vyavasitām* where *samāna* means "equal" and *vyavasitām* means "functioning," justifies our translation as "parity."

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3. "Like a female *cakora*" *(cakori iva)*

Sankara resorts to the consciousness of a female partridge in order to make it easy for the reader to think of the counterpart of the bright side of consciousness described in the first half of the verse. It is within consciousness, whether of an animal, a bird or a human being, that we can correctly represent to ourselves that cancellable counterpart of consciousness which the numerator is supposed to represent in hypostatic terms. He takes care even to say that it is a female partridge, to show that negativity is more consistent with the feminine consciousness than with the masculine consciousness.

4. "The world hereunder shines" *(jagat vilasati)*

The world cannot ordinarily be said to be shining, except in terms of consciousness. Advaita philosophy depends on the cancellation of two selfs, the *pratyag ātma*, the negative Self, and the *ātma* which is its own mirror reflection *(cidābhāsa)*. Whether it is a concept or a percept which looms, the world has to refer to one or the other of these two aspects of consciousness to have any reality at all, whether existent or subsistent, or both. When moonlight falls on a seaside village with its white walls, the calm and pleasing scene is not the same village as seen under the blazing noonday sun. The female *cakora* sees the world as if by moonlight. It does not like the sun. What it sees is thus to be distinguished from what this *cakra* implies on its positive side.

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samunmīlat samvit kamala makarandaika rasikam
bhaje hamsadvandvam kim api mahatām mānasa caram
yad ālāpād aṣṭādaśa guṇita vidyā pariṇatir-
yad ādatte doṣād guṇam akhilam adbhyaḥ paya iva.

I adore those twin swans, intent on enjoying the nectar
Of the lotus blooming within the consciousness of certain great ones,
Within whose minds they swim; as a result of their elaboration, the maturation
Of the eighteen arts takes place freed from dross, their goodness extracted as milk from water.

In Verse 38 we have the picture of two swans swimming in a lotus pond, having at least one lotus blooming at its center. The first thing to notice about the overall design of this *cakra*, besides the fact that its conventional name is omitted, is that there is no value referred to that is especially spiritual. It is rather meant to be a normalized version of value, where spirituality and morality meet and cancel out into a picture representing Beauty in a very real form. In parks and gardens anywhere in the world it is possible to see a pair of swans swimming in a pond, and it is not difficult to imagine a blooming lotus flower at its center. Swans are animals that need food in the ordinary sense, and although water supports vitality in a deeper sense, other food such as milk is required for the sustenance of normal life here. The mind, with its two functions having a horizontal parity between them, one of which could be auditory and the other visual in its reference—as with music and dance—could be conceded to be the ground on which beings find some sort of aesthetic pleasure or enjoyment. Mind-stuff is here compared to water, while something more nourishing, which contains body-building elements of food, is necessary to make the two swans have their enjoyable active life within the pond.

The classical theory of aesthetics belonging to Sanskrit culture comprises all enjoyable artistic values within the scope of a fan-like expansion or elaboration of the elements of interest that could be normal to human beings. These are supposed to be the nine essences, called *rasas*. The nine *rasas* are *śṛṅgāra*

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(love), *vīra* (heroism), *bībhatsa* (disgust), *raudra* (anger), *hāsya* (mirth), *bhayānaka* (terror), *karuṇa* (pity), *adbhuta* (wonder), and *śānta* (tranquility). If nine *rasas* are given to the visual (actual) side, nine *rasas* must be given to the auditory (virtual) side too. Thus we have, between visible and audible arts, eighteen *rasas* spread out like a fan, resembling the order of colors in the spectrum. The color red is always associated with passion, because the conventional language of color is understood, though vaguely, even in common parlance. The point where horizontal values meet the vertical parameter is to be located exactly at the core of the lotus. The 180 degrees above that zero-point could be divided into eighteen sectors of 10 degrees on the plus and minus sides of the structural whole. The long and beautiful necks of the swans can delve down into the mud to pull out the tender edible roots of the lotus plant, on which they are supposed to thrive. When swans migrate to the Himalayan regions it is conventionally understood that some edible parts of the lotus plant are carried in their beaks, at the tip of their outstretched necks. The swans reach *Mānasarovar*, the "mind lake" located somewhere high in the Himalayas, in due course, enabling them to live at a celestial level and on an earthly level alternately. Highly evolved spiritual souls are compared in Hindu literature to a central locus of this kind when they are called *paramahamsas*, which means that they are very realistically related to the total context of the Absolute Value. The two swans touch and do not touch the lotus, like spirits apart, by participating through subtle verticality only at the zero-point.

1. "The nectar of the lotus" *(kamala makarandam)*

Nectar is something nourishing and enjoyable, of which milk could be considered a particular instance. Nectar is more than milk by its added enjoyability. The extra elements of enjoyability result from the elaboration of aesthetic interests in the minds of the two swans treated as one.

2. "Certain great ones" *(kim api mahatām)*

To perfected *paramahamsas* the duality between real or virtual, and hypostatic or hierophantic values have all been normalized.

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3. "The maturation of the eighteen arts" *(aṣṭādaśa guṇita vidyā pariṇatiḥ)*

There is a central locus in the neutral and absolute Self, which is the source from which all enjoyment must start, whether in visual or auditory arts. Even when the arts are withdrawn, in higher *samādhi*, these outgoing items of elaboration could be thought of as each being withdrawn into its own source, which is this same central locus. Maturation should not be mixed up with the idea of evolution because of the use of the Sanskrit word *pariṇāma* used here. Maturation here only increases its eidetic content without changing it horizontally, as when we say that twilight matures fully when the sun is four degrees below the horizon. A mango ripens and matures without changing its identity horizontally.

4. "Goodness extracted as milk from water" *(ādatte guṇam akhilam adbhyaḥ paya iva)*

Milk has a horizontal value reference which is existential in status. Water, on the other hand, has a vertical reference because of its pure sapidity. Thus, we get the two references in respect of value, within the fan-like amplitude of which we could insert the double spectrum of both auditory and visual arts radiating from a central core which is both a source as well as an epicenter for all manifestations or absorptions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this verse the language of conventional cliches has been used in an unobtrusive manner, by which it is possible to see that what is real could be the same as what is ideal, when viewed neutrally and normally, as between perceptual and conceptual values. The yogi has nothing to add or subtract here. The *Brahma Sūtras* recommend such an attitude, in which nothing is to be explained away from life nor added as an idea to embellish reality. One has neither to paint lilies nor gild gold. Vedanta is not a form of idealism. It is fully realistic, as this verse of Narayana Guru's *Darśana Māla*, clearly underlines:

Of this (world) there is certainly nothing to be
rejected nor accepted;
As for the Self, it is self-luminous.
Having understood (thus), one should withdraw
from all functionings. (X. 9)

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tava svādhiṣṭhāne hutavaham ādhiṣṭhāya niratam
tam īḍe samvartam janani mahatīm tām ca samayām
yad āloke lokān dahati mahati krodhakalite
dayārdrā ya dṛṣṭiś śiśiram upacāram racayati.

Oh Mother, I praise You, placing in your *svādhiṣṭhāna*
the fire of sacrifice—
Ever looking upon it as the great fire of doom—
and also placing *Samaya* there,
So that when the worlds are burning due to his anger,
Her mercy-moist regard renders to it the cooling touch of
early spring.

Water cools and fire burns within the totality of the absolute content of reality, viewed as a phenotype and not as a noumenon. We can think of these two factors, fire and water, as participating from opposite sides of the total situation. When viewed from such an overall perspective, we can appreciate how this *cakra* called *svādhiṣṭhāna* is also based on the principle of the cancellation of counterparts. On a hot summer day a cool and perfumed breeze can act as an absolute source of consolation, even if it should last only for a few moments. The joy of cancellation does not depend upon the duration of the state of consolation and could be enjoyed for itself in the span of a split second.

1. *"svādhiṣṭhāna"*

The term *svādhiṣṭhāna* suggests that it is a *cakra* founded on itself. We have examined the status of the previous verse, which corresponds to the *cakra* conventionally named *anāhata*, which suggests that something like a bell has not been struck. A bell that is unstruck would represent a neutral position between the possibility of its sound and its own material existence. When we come to *svādhiṣṭhāna*, we have to put its locus a little lower in the vertical axis, because the basis of the *cakra* is within itself, not on the numerator side of effects. It has a negative reference, but the numerator against which the cancellation within its scope is to take place has got a highly positive status.

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Finally, lower and higher are meant to have no differentiating significance between *cakras* or *ādhāras*.

2. "The fire of sacrifice" *(hutavaham)*

We find here two references to fire, one to the fire of sacrifice and the other to the fire of doom. We have to locate these two fires correctly at their proper structural positions before we can grasp the status of this *cakra*. The first of sacrifice could be imagined to be somewhere near the region of the navel, just below the zero-point—on the side of existence—because such a fire has to be really capable of burning at least some fuel. This idea of "the fire of sacrifice" is verified in Verse 78.

3. "Fire of doom" *(samvartam)*

The "fire of doom" cannot be located in the same position as the fire of sacrifice. Doomsday is always in the future and has necessarily an apocalyptic status. The function of doom is thus to be imagined as having a numerator reference, even when that picture has been produced far beyond the omega-point in the possible worlds of prospective values. To balance this exaggerated apocalyptic tendency, there is a need to postulate its counterpart in the form of a feminine elemental factor which has to be existential rather than subsistential. Such a factor is what is meant to be implied by the second goddess, named Samaya.

4. "Samaya"

We are familiar with this goddess favored by the Tantric school of Samayins, which we discussed in our comments on Verse 33. The total overall Goddess, having an absolutist status cannot be held responsible for any partial or unilateral functions. This must be the reason why Sankara resorts to a goddess already known in the context of Mother worship, who is capable here of counteracting the heat implied in the omega-point of reference.

5. "Cooling touch" *(śiśiram)*

We have already explained that this kind of cooling need not be eternally operating. Cartesian occasionalism permits the notion of cancellation taking place at a given moment and thus revealing the will of the Absolute. Taken in this sense, even in this world of suffering, there are pleasant moments of absolute joy, which Wordsworth would perhaps call "intimations of immortality".

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taṭitvantam śaktyā timiraparipanthi sphuraṇayā
sphurannānā ratnābharaṇa pariṇaddhendra dhanuṣam
tava śyāmam megham kam api maṇipūraika śaraṇam
niṣeve varṣantam haramihira taptam tribhuvanam.

As found in certain contemplatives who take full refuge in
your *maṇipūra,*
I adore that dark cloud of yours, traversed by forceful lightning,
Banishing darkness and shining, bursting into sparks with the
varied gem-decked maturity of Indra's bow,
While over the three worlds agonized by the heat of Siva-sun
it sheds its showering waters.

In Verse 40, we find a description of a cloudburst in a thunderstorm, so familiar to anybody in any part of the world. The name *maṇipūra* adds to the real event pictured here only a slight embellishment, to the minimum extent required in the name of literary flourish. *Mani* means "precious gem," and *pūra* means "filling up." *Maṇipūra* suggests a plenitude of gems. The sky and the stars have been compared to a box of gems by other philosophers, including Kant. The jewel box is the counterpart of the sky, especially when beautiful shining gems are displayed against a dark background which could stand for the box, sometimes described as made of ebony, as in Verse 94. A rainbow that could dominate a dark cloud is one of the most beautiful of natural sights. Wordsworth says that such a sight makes the heart of the beholder, young or old, leap up in joy. If we put a circle round such a picture and insert streaks of lightning, accompanied by thunder, we get all the component parts that make up a *cakra* or *ādhāra* even in the world of natural phenomena. Nothing need be left to the imagination. Lightning traverses a cloud at right angles as a rule, and, if we treat ramifications in it as incidental, a vertical parameter links lightning and thunder. The dark cloud could be considered the

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body, while thunder and lightning together constitute the soul. Thunder descends while lightning ascends to meet it, or vice versa. The principle of action and retroaction is implied in this situation. Rain is a double blessing that descends onto the *terra firma*, and all living beings welcome it with gratitude. Let us examine now the implications of the expressions in this verse.

1. "Certain contemplatives" (*kaṃ api*)

This reference is to suggest that not all contemplatives will arrive at the full understanding of this vision of Absolute Beauty. Most contemplatives are likely to make a personal fetish of their own approach to the high value of the Absolute, thus having a tendency to remove such a value, by abstraction and generalization, from everyday reality. Sankara is conscious of this tendency to fetishism. He therefore underlines that an actual cloudburst or thunderstorm could contain elements of wonder and overwhelming beauty adequate to give significant content to the notion of the highest of absolutes.

In full-fledged Vedanta nothing real is to be explained away in favor of mathematical or schematic abstractions. There is nothing to be added to or subtracted from the Real, as it is in itself, when it is properly understood in the light of Sankara's Advaita Vedanta.

2. "Traversed by forceful lightning" (*taḷitvantam śaktyā*)

Lightning traversing a dark cloud suggests at once that it cuts through the cloud at right angles. Thus the vertical parameter and its positive and negative aspects have been inserted into the *cakra* as an important linking relational feature.

3. "Varied gem-decked maturity" (*nānā ratnābharaṇa pariṇatam*)

A rainbow seen in the sky is sometimes faint and sometimes clear. Sometimes above a rainbow a second, fainter, rainbow can be distinguished. The fainter colors of the second rainbow, which are inverted in spectral order by a double refraction, would justify the aptness of the term "maturity" as employed here. A rainbow could suggest fireworks, especially when we think of the chemical elements, which represent colors of the spectrum according to the periodic law. Stars such as "white dwarfs" and "red gaints" could be thought of as having their

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elemental peculiarities, as could different colored gems. The implications of the term "maturity" *(pariṇata)* has been explained previously under Verse 38. The rainbow has been named in the various vernaculars of India by popular agreement as belonging either to Kāma or to Indra. When attributed to Indra it gets a more absolutist status, because Indra is the chief of all the other gods.

4. "The three worlds" *(tribhuvanam)*

Physiographically, we cannot think of rain moistening three worlds, but contemplative cosmology permits of three levels of value called *bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ* and *svaḥ* (earth, atmosphere, and heaven). *Bhuvar loka* represents the intermediate world of air between *bhūr loka* and *svar loka*, which represent terrestrial and celestial regions, respectively. Modern cosmology admits of millions of miles of empty space between our own planetary system and that of the truely celestial bodies in the Milky Way or in other galaxies. The principle of heat and the principle of cold prevail not only physiographically but also in the large extended cosmology known to modern physics, which is now beginning to talk of black and white holes, matter and antimatter, et cetera.

5. "Siva-sun" *(hara mihira)*

The sun is the source of energy in our solar system. As a logical consequence it must necessarily have a negative counterpart at an opposite limiting pole, by virtue of which the energy gained is balanced by an equal loss, in order to maintain the equilibrium of the cosmos. "Siva-sun" marks the omega-point limit of the total situation as a source of positive energy. Modern theoretical terms like "entropy" and "negentropy" justify such notions.

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tavādhāre mūle saha samayayā lāsya parayā
navātmānam manye navarasa mahā tāṇḍava naṭam
ubhābhyām etābhyām udayavidhim uddiśya dayayā
sanāthābhyām jajñe janakajaranīmaj jagad idam.

I meditate on your new self, placed in your *mūlādhāra* together with Samaya,
Given to her *lāsya* dance, and also that great *tāṇḍava* dancer,
Giving expression thereby to all nine aesthetic interests, thus by their joint lordship,
By mercy intending the rebirth of the world, they confer on it the renewed status of having both father and mother.

Verse 41 refers by name to the *mūlādhāra cakra*. Already, in Verse 9, the same *mūlādhāra* has been referred to as "earth." There the *cakras* were mentioned in an ascending order, starting with the *mūlādhāra* as the lowest, which seems to agree with textbooks of Yoga. *Mūlādhāra* evidently has a firm ontological reference in the *terra firma* itself, so there is no room for ambiguity in the matter of fixing its epistemological status among the *cakras*.

About the actual number of *cakras* to be officially admitted into our discussion for the purposes of this work, there are particular uncertainties to be noted. In Verse 9, counting the *cakras* that have been named and structurally located in an ontologically biased phenomenological scheme, we find that the *sahasrāra padma* (thousand-petalled lotus) figures as the upper limiting point, making seven *cakras* in all. In the structure of the *srī cakra*, as described in Verse 11, we find nine centers of *prakṛti*, or *mūlaprakṛti* (prime nature). If we now ask ourselves if there would be any objection to including a tenth, it becomes a fairly ambiguous matter to decide one way or the other. But for purposes of structural symmetry, it would be neater, mathematically at least, to think of "five plus five" as making up the totality

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of the *cakras*. This is not, however, favored by Sankara, who cannot be said to be without a sense of neatness in his mathematical abstractions and generalizations. Ten can be arrived at by adding one to nine, or nine by subtracting one from ten. When ascending dialectics is involved adding one to nine would be normal, but in descending dialectics subtracting one from ten would be normal. The demands of mechanistic symmentry are not the same as a truely structural symmetry which respects such factors as reciprocity and complementarity. As in the case of extras accompanying a football team, where the bigger number could be favored, here the tendency toward numbers greater than the minimum required could not be taken as objectionable. Two extras for a match could accompany the team reasonably, even though they will not necessariy be employed in the match itself. Only one of them may be required in the normal course of events, but in principle the other is also necessary, though he will not usually enter into the game actually. A similar status has to be given to the limiting *cakra* at the plus or minus ends, depending upon the contingency that might call for their entry into the game. There is an either or option presented here, whether it is an ascending or a descending series with which we happen to be concerned. The status of the *sahasrāra cakra* in Verse 9, which would make seven very tangible *cakras*, is thus to be treated as an extra when we accept six as the normal basis. The *mūlādhāra cakra* could similarly have a tenth one added to its negative limit. It is not difficult to recognize a certain methodological alternative choice implied in the enumeration of different *cakras* in different textbooks, for which we too have to make some allowance. We could recognize six basic *cakras*, referred to ordinarily as the *ṣaḍ ādhāra* or *ṣaḍ cakra*. When Verse 9 and the present reference to *mūlādhāra* and five others are considered together (Verses 36–41), keeping in our minds the either/or ambiguities involved, it will be possible for us to justify the nine *mūlaprakṛtis* represented in the *srī cakra*. The word *prakṛti* would suggest an ontological perspective rather than a teleological one. This does not mean that a teleological perspective is to be ruled out altogether, for both the ascending and the descending methods are equally permissible. Some have suggested that we could invert the *sri cakra* to obtain the Siva (male) *cakra*, but such an inversion is not called for because

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Vedanta, at least with Sankara, gives primacy to ontological cause over teleological effect in its recognized methodology. A rope is more real than the idea of a snake superimposed on it. Existence must have primacy over essence, as even modern existentialists claim. Sense data cannot be explained away, and any philosophy that tends to such a form of idealism only discredits itself by having to contradict commonsense at every stage of its speculation. Appearance might overcover reality, but reality, is not abolished thereby. Thus it is that the *sri cakra* calls the nine centers by the name *mūlaprakṛtis*. *Mūla* means "root" or "source," and *prakṛti* means "nature." The ontological bias here is inevitable and necessary for a fully scientific approach. If a value called Absolute Beauty is to come within human experience at all, the eighth *cakra* or *ādhāra* could be added to or subtracted from the basic seven recognized in Verse 9 and then it could be named either *braḥma cakra* or *braḥma randhra* as seen in the two alternative upanishads that we have used for reference (see our Appendix). Thus the term *aṣṭabandha* (eight stable positions) sometimes used in connection with installation of temple images could be justified in terms meaning "eight bonds".

One more detail remains to be clarified. In Verse 11 we have referred to four *srīkaṇṭhas*, evidently referring to a masculine divinity used as a monomark. Any monomark having a numerator reference could be considered masculine. In the present verse we find a reference to Siva, as a masculine divinity, dancing with a parity of status with a feminine divinity, although the *mūlādhāra* refers to a lower limit in the total situation. The masculine divinity here still has a numerator reference, just as in Verse 9 the female divinity is promoted to the seventh *cakra*, beyond the *cakras* known to the *kuḷa* path, which has still got a denominator reference. Siva is here on the denominator side with a numerator reference. "New" means his reference is on the numerator side, while Samaya's reference is normal.

1. "Your new self" *(navātmānam)*

This must have an omega-point reference and thus must imply a masculine Siva, because already the feminine is represented by the other goddess called Samaya, who has a normal status with an ontological reference. Newness only implies that its reference is positive.

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2. "Your *mūlādhāra*"

Each *cakra* represents the totality of the Absolute in a normalized form in the context of beauty as a tangible reality. This reference in the second person singular is therefore justified. The word *mūlādhāra* still refers to the ontological or "source" side of the situation.

3. "Samaya"

The status of the goddess Samaya remains the same. Because the school of Samayins were not aware of the rival cancellable aspects, their approach was unilateral, immanent and within the scope of the three *guṇas*. A similar goddess is under reference in Verses 34, 37 and 39. According to the context we have to give a legitimate status to each of these Samaya goddesses or divinities.

4. "Her *lāsya* dance . . . that *tāṇḍava* dancer"

Lāsya and *tāṇḍava* are the two styles of dancing proper to feminine and masculine dancers, respectively. *Tāndava* is characterized by a sinuous curve that is vertical like a freqency, while *lāsya* has got a horizontal reference as in a wavelength. This distinction is well known in the Bharata Nāṭyam technique of Indian dance.

5. "All nine aesthetic interests" *(navarasa)*

The nine aesthetic interests could be multiplied by two, as they could pertain to visual or auditory expressions in art. Basically they are nine and belong to both of them.

6. "Joint lordship" *(sanāthābhyām ubhābhyām)*

A husband is considered the master and the wife a mistress. Thus, there is a kind of lordship, whether masculine or feminine, implied within the parity of the status of the two divinities here. Vertically viewed, they are not husband and wife, but father and mother. It is the grace or the sanction of the total Goddess that gives room for all these possibilities or probabilities.

7. "Intending the rebirth of the world" *(udaya vidhim uddiśya)*

The rebirth is intended to be considered as taking place every split second. In Verse 55, opening and shutting the eyes represent creation and dissolution. Between the contradiction

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of opening and shutting of eyes, there is a purer process of becoming which knows no contraries. It has a third or fourth-dimensional status which should not be mixed up with alternate creation and dissolution.

8. "Renewed status"

Renewed status implies that dissolution took place once, as understood in the idea of the great deluge (*pralaya*). Alternation of creation and dissolution can be viewed in the eternal present or as in an eternal moment. Plato's writings justify both these possibilities (cf. *Parmenides* or *Timaeus)*.

9. "Father and mother" *(janaka jananīmat)*

Conferring parenthood implies that the idea of having both father and mother, as opposed to being an orphan in respect of one or the other. The correct opposite (being an orphan), which is anterior to this moment, is what is to be kept in mind here.

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PART II

SAUNDARYA LAHARI

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THE TRANSITION FROM ANANDA TO SAUNDARYA

Pandits and professors alike have agreed to put a mark of punctuation between Verses 41 and 42, distinguishing what is titled *Ananda Laharī*, (Verses 1 through 41), from the remainder of the work, entitled *Saundarya Laharī*. This latter title is applicable to the work as a whole. Thus there are two works distinguished within the one work.

The reasons given for making such a division in the very heart of this work vary within a wide range of speculation, and are sometimes not unmixed with imaginary episodes connected with the personal life of the author, Saṅkara. In Verses 75 there is a lurking enigmatic reference to a "Dravidian child" who, on being nourished by the milk of the Goddess, became born as a poet who could write beautiful poetry. Sanskrit is unquestionably the language of the Aryan context, and if a Dravidian poet is to be given the authorship of the latter half of this work, as some surmise, it might be conceded that there seems to be at first sight a change of subject matter or at least a revision in the perspective from which the subject matter is treated after the fortyfirst verse. The transition, when we come to examine it closely, needs to be effected very carefully, taking into consideration epistemological, methodological, and axiological factors of a very thin speculative order. Evidently this requirement has confused the minds of critics and commentators, both European and Indian, to such an extent that Sankara's authorship of these verses, which belong so beautifully together to the same context of Absolute Beauty, is put into question. There is no other author in the field who could even be distantly suggested as a substitute for Sankara.

A discrepancy between the style of the two sections of verses has also been suggested by both pandits and professors. The "Dravidian child" of Verse 75, if an actual product of the Tamil or South Indian context of spirituality, must have been well versed in the Tantra that was natural to the *śaiva* type of *sidhānta* as distinguished from the Vedanta based on the Upanishads. Some

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have even dared to suggest the name of one of the four Tamil saint's Tirujñānasambandar, in trying to identify this Dravidian child. But it is indeed difficult to explain how that Tamil saint, who has never been credited with any other work in Sanskrit, could have composed a work of such classical finish. The enigmatic nature of the theory of double authorship, put forth so fancifully by a sufficiently respectable group of critics and commentators, is only heightened by their hypothetical proposals and cannot therefore be warranted.

There has even been a legendary incident created to explain this imaginary enigma of double authorship, in which Sankara comes upon a scene where the supposed real Dravidian author had emblazoned these hundred verses on a wall. As the first forty verses contained deeper secrets of the Saivite Tantra tradition of proto-Aryan origin, that Dravidian child, at the insistence of Devi herself, quickly wiped off this first half of the work to guard these secrets from the heterodox Aryan eyes of the Sanskritist Sankara, supposedly a stranger to this ancient Tantric tradition. In spite of this, however, Sankara is said to have been clever enough to reconstruct from memory these first forty verses, having the gift of remembering words which he had read just once. This highly imaginative episode, even including Devi as an accomplice in the trick only proves how natural mythmaking is to the human mind. (This story is found in the Malayalam edition of *Saundarya Laharī* by Mahadeva Shastri, page 101, and in the Theosophical Society edition, page 214.)

The whole mystery stem from the fact that the schematisms and non-verbose language of non-didactic description adopted here by Sankara is something completely new even to his latter day critics, who tend to dismiss him as a mere *māyāvādin*, that is, a believer in the unreality of the universe, and sometimes even as a *prac-channa bauddha*, a Buddhist in disguise. The theologically based philosophies that superseded Sankara during Moghul supremacy in India, and especially those latter forms of philosophy that prevailed after the fall of the Vijayanagar Empire, tended to make Sankara a less important figure on the philosophical scene of the decadent India of recent centuries. A cultural hiatus thus developed—both among Indian pandits and among Western scholars, who came with the East India Company more as curiousity hunters than as genuine scholars belonging to the

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context proper to the precious cultural expressions such as what we have here before us as a supreme example. The Mysore Wars and the Indian Mutiny could be said to be due mostly to the defects of such a cultural gap or vacuum, which tended to put the graded and orderly development of a sense of cultural values into confusion.

A close scrutiny of Verse 41 will reveal to us that although it refers directly to the *mūlādhāra cakra*, one of the most ontologically biased of all the *cakras*—even referring to the re-emergence of the world into a more real status from its more amorphous anterior state of flux—this same verse suggests that the personality of the Goddess enjoys only a thin schematic status in terms of Absolute Beauty abstracted and generalized to its possible limit. Thus, while the dance of Siva and Samaya takes place at the ontological limit of the total situation, the Goddess herself remains unaffected by any rivalry with the pair who are given full freedom to bring the world back into existence, while she remains uninvolved in this phenomenal aspect in an overall and implied sense. The requirements of parity and symmetry are both complied with and transcended at the same time. The climax of normalization in the transition from the perceptual to the conceptual, from the Self to the non-Self, from ontology to teleology, or from physics to metaphysics, has been effected in principle in Verse 41. The *mūlādhāra* of that verse has nothing earthy about it at all, but represents a world ground, sufficiently fluid and displaying a continuous state of novelty, in which the world gets created and destroyed alternately in split-second terms of momentariness in the eternal present. It is not an inert form of realism that is to be understood here, though the lesser Tantric schools might tend to imagine that it pertains to their own sets of values. Prejudice in favor of Tantrism, as against full-fledged Advaitism, implies a gap that is in the minds of critics rather than in the work itself, when properly and more closely examined.

One can see that in Verse 42 Sankara takes care to keep close to the *cakra* form of meditation, even though he is passing from the limit of ontology (Verse 41) into the domain of teleology (from Verse 42 onward). In fact, it is hard to discover any abruptness at all in the changeover so harmoniously effected in

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these transitional verses (40-43) whose sequence is perfect. The world becomes real as the focus of attention is transferred from the feet of the Goddess to her crest jewel, which is made up of twelve suns—for each of the twelve months of the year—fused together and tinged with the twilight color of magenta, to make them resemble rubies rather than diamonds. Bright diamond would apply more to the midday sun, while red ruby would better represent the twilight sun of morning or evening, or both, when pressed close together and fused into the crest jewel of the revised Goddess, whose cosmological personality is going to be reveiwed from head to foot in the remainder of this work. The inside becomes outside in this transition but they retain a unity as if enclosed in circles of consciousness, not unlike the *cakras* of the section just left behind. We would call these circles "conceptual *cakras*," having the same unitive value status, though instead of being placed within the heart of the yogi, they have been put "over there," as it were, in terms of overt beauty, as in a landscape at sunrise. Thus the gem-set island within consciousness gives place to a Himalayan sunrise. Such is the nature of the transition we have to keep in mind to appreciate the continuity of the same value factor which could be called indifferently *ānanda* or *saundarya*. Whether applicable to life in the Self or in the non-Self, it is the same overwhelming experience of Beauty, viewed from two apparently different perspectives, that we are being treated to by Sankara.

He is conscious of his unrivalled position here, as he pointedly pats himself on the back when he says that this same "Dravidian child" became an equal to any great poet of antiquity that we could think of. The internal evidence of Verse 75 is thus, to our eyes at least, overwhelmingly conclusive, and we have no hesitation in brushing aside all rival miscellaneous constructions on this matter. Narayana Guru could be considered a legitimate continuer of this Vedantidic tradition. He speaks in the Malayalam language, of Kerala, which is the byproduct of the interaction of the Siva-worshiping culture of South India and the sun-worshiping culture of the Himalayan regions. The island placed in mid-ocean and the sunlit peaks of the abode of Siva become interchangeable as absolute Value factors with an inner or outer factor of overwhelming intoxication in terms of Beauty.

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gatair māṇikyatvam gagana maṇibhis sāndra ghaṭitam
kirīṭam te haimam himagirisute kīrtayati yaḥ
sa nīḍeyachāyā churaṇa śabalam candra śakalam
dhanuś śaunāsīram kimiti na nibadhnāti dhiṣaṇām.

These (twelve) sky orbs having attained to rubyhood by being pressed close together—
Would not he who can thus praise your golden crown, oh Daughter of the Snowy Peak,
Have then in his mind the impression of the bow of Indra
When, by reflected glory, a slender crescent is produced by gems imbedded therein.

Verse 42 can be seen to presuppose the *cakra* form of visualizing the Absolute Beauty value of the Goddess in the same way as hitherto, through the end of Verse 41. In Verses 39, 40 and 41, the transition from inner space to outer space has already been completed. The lower negative limit of the vertical axis has been touched when the split-second world is created once again by the joint dance of the goddess and god there. It is not an actual *terra firma* that has been created, but one of an ontologically philosophical order. There is a difference between a clod of earth and a mentally revised version of the same, nor is the clod of earth a mere concept either. A schematic status of a neutrally monistic world—neither material nor mental—was what conferred, by the union of the functions of Siva and Pārvati in a combined dance of bliss on equal terms, their joint parenthood on an orphaned universe. Now the *mūlādhāra cakra* stands "over there," as it were, lifted hypostatically into outer space rather than being located in the inner space of the negative and collective unconscious of humanity, which is now awakened to its parenthood, having been hitherto steeped in empty orphanage. Such are some of the implications to be carried over to the present verse before giving it a treatment which continues to

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respect the same norms and methodological requirements in the positive series of descending pictures that are going to follow in the remaining verses, beginning at the topmost level of the vertical axis.

The three circles surrounding the *srī cakra* could still be retained, representing three limits of the upsurging billow of Beauty. It cuts both ways, but here these circles are set in a background of borrowed light called *cidābhāsa*, while in the previous context they glowed with a schematic splendor or "clear obscurity," still visible to the penetrating intuitive vision of the yogi or contemplative. A peacock's feather seen against the magenta background of a dark cloud would perhaps suggest such a dark, splendid vision of Beauty. The magenta thus participates with the blue sapphire of Indra's world on the one hand, and the ruby on the other with all its brilliant fluorescent luminosity. Such would be the nearest analogy, as indicated by Sankara in the first line of this verse. A lotus shines or looms by virtue of its petals. A crystal radiates color through its cross-polarized light, emitted, as it were, through a grating while a supernova sends its beams far and wide. Here, the term *mayūkha* (ray of light) would be acceptable to Sankara, while monomarks lettered or unlettered could apply to a crystal, and the lotus could speak the language of the *śrī cakra*, using symbols but relying on signs, whether colorful or not. The whole setup would not be unlike that of a chess board on which the pieces live and move as in a game.

The "rubyhood" of this verse has therefore to be understood as belonging to a context of brilliance and not of shade or mere tint. A high degree of saturation, however, need not be ruled out because twelve sky orbs seem to have been pressed together and fused into one large brilliant magenta-colored ruby here. We can readily guess that the twelve orbs refer to the twilight suns, two for each day, of the twelve months of the year. Imagine such suns at twenty-four sunsets and sunrises, typical of each of the twelve months, blending into twilight redness in the sky to produce this particular shade of magenta. One could even add the more fluorescent inner brilliance of moonsets and moonrises. Locate such a precious stone at the very focal point of your meditation inwardly, where you recognize Beauty to reside in

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abstract and general terms. This requires some philosophical or contemplative effort, but one could consciously or subconsciously cultivate such an attitude and construct it in absolute Space, in spite of what might actually be experienced through the senses directly in the more overt or quantitative version of the same space. It is thus that the reader can place himself, correctly oriented *vis-a-vis* the Beauty to be appreciated in the remaining verses.

It is a process of descending dialectics that will now unravel itself step by step before the contemplative, as induced by the poetic suggestions of Sankara, who will present a series of positive *cakras* instead of the negative ones hitherto presented. The reader has to be fully prepared to appreciate them as they are intended to be, and not as he might wrongly presume under premises unwarranted by a Science of the Absolute. If he should make such a mistake it would be his own fault, and not that of anyone else. A further caution is that the onlooker will not see his visions when he is lying in an easy chair—that is, in a state of passivity—as has been hitherto acceptable. He is now asked to put some constructions on something that is lazily presented to his view at the lower level of sense impressions. The photographer must now adjust his camera and not just take sudden snapshots without minding the glare adjustments. As in a time exposure, the message has to "sink in" to reveal the superimposition of pictures. The datum of the sense is passive while the higher intelligence constructs its own version of value, of "doing violence," as Bergson put it, to the given picture so as to see it related to structural lines which, like holographic ghost outline pictures, of a different kind of wavelength or vibration, will add a stereoscopic structural dimension of light as if superimposed on the original datum more passively given to the eyes.

The creative imagination of a poet is brought into position here. The poet who is capable of such an imagination will see in the golden crown of the Goddess another crescent, besides the one that is already to be placed there because the Goddess is the dialectical counterpart of Siva (as in Verse 23). It is normal for the Absolute Goddess to retain at least schematically a point of participation with the highest and thinnest of vertical

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points where Siva, in a purely mathematical context, is placed. The thin crescent represents a numerator limit where such a participation between two absolute values, one belonging to Devi, the other belonging to Siva, could meet and abolish themselves mutually into one and the same crescent. There is reference to a second crescent here, said to be that of Indra, who is a demiurge of a lower hypostatic order. The bow of Indra is sometimes spoken of as identical with a rainbow. A rainbow in its jeweled glory belongs more to an ontological than to a teleological order. Wordsworth said that a rainbow in the sky could make his heart leap up within him, in his childhood as well as in his old age. We have in him, therefore, just that poet under reference in this verse, to whom the glory of a rainbow succeeds in producing the echo of an upsurge of Absolute Beauty within. Half, at least, of such an experience must be personal or perceptual to him, while the other half could have a conceptual or a mathematical status only. The creative minds of great poets are the common meeting ground of these two grades of crescents. A hypostatic and a hierophantic crescent would thus become legitimately both possible and probable here. In Verse 46 also, there will be two more crescents which are juxtaposed like two brackets at a slightly lower level than the ruby tip of the crown of this verse. The crescent of the Indra context and the mathematically thin crescent already there, which marks the limit of the function of Sivahood, belong to two distinct epistemological orders. The former is phenomenal and the latter is noumenal. If we should think in terms of these two divisions of Kantian philosophy, the two crescents given here could be placed inverted like two brackets enclosing the central value of the big ruby, resulting from the fusion of the twelve twilight orbs of each month. Though not explicitly stated in this verse, when read together with Verse 46, this bracketing could, in principle at least, be thought permissible in anticipation. This is not, however, necessary to insist upon, because it is within a poet's imagination that we are asked to see the second Indra-bow. Further it is the product of something like diffraction and not of reflection or even of many refractions. One has to be a great poet to put it there. Then alone would such a second crescent correctly cancel out against the thinnest of mathematical crescents that is supposed already to belong to Siva, without

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being based on any crown of the Goddess. Sankara here only intends to cancel the most delicate of ontological beauty aspects with the most logically thin ones of intelligible values. The cancellation between them is intended to produce in the mind of the reader that overwhelming upsurge of Absolute Beauty called *Saundarya Laharī*.

The beauty of a gem is colorful in its appeal. The beauty enclosed within the two crescents of Verse 46 is meant to encircle the ambrosial content of a mature moon, which essentially appeals to the sense of taste rather than mere sight. Such gradation between hierophantic and hypostatic values should not be left unnoticed by the reader who wishes to derive the more finalized lessons of the schematism contained in this composition. The "reflected glory" of this verse could even be changed into a "diffracted glory". The Sanskrit text would bear such a revision, as the word *nīḍe* suggests "home-ground" and *chāyāc churaṇa śabaḷam* means to "become brilliant with the variegated effect of bright shining light", a kind of iridescent brightness.

The second and third lines underline that all this is to be attributed to the fertile mind of the poet. Here this imaginary beauty belongs only to the golden crown of the Goddess and not to the person of the Goddess herself, to which we are coming more directly in Verse 46. We are still in the domain of a kind of mathematical mysticism here.

The fusion of the twelve luminaries of the twelve months is also an operation that only a mathematician-mystic could easily accomplish when extrapolated and imagined as applicable to any number of years, past or future. We can arrive at a thin vertical parameter, without which the correlation of the various implied *cakras* of many of these verses would become difficult. It is like the thread of Ariadne meant to guide Theseus back through the labyrinth of the Minotaur so that he would not be lost in that horizontal maze.

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dhunotu dhvāntam nas tulita dalitendīvara vanam
ghana snigdhaślakṣṇam cikura nikurumbam tava śive
yadīyam saurabhyam sahajam upalabdhum sumanaso
vasantyasmin manye valamathanavāṭīviṭapinām.

Let the blooming blue-lotus-forest of your thick, glossy and
lustrous cluster of locks,
Oh Consort of Siva, banish the darkness within us—
To gain whose natural fragrance the flowers of the
garden of Indra,
As I can guess, take their place within your tresses.

Whereas in Verse 46 the author involves himself in the first person directly instead of looking with the eyes of a mathematician-mystic at the jewel on the crown (Verse 42), which does not organically belong to the beauty of the Goddess, in this verse he descends into more direct relation to the *elan vital* within the personality of the Goddess in more living terms. Crystal or gem beauty gives place to flower beauty here, where two sets of flowers are seen to be playfully interlaced. They are rivals; one has a perfume that is natural to the life of the Goddess herself, while the other has a "borrowed" status insofar as it belongs to an Indra-world of values, which is false to the extend that Indra is only a mythological demiurge and not a real person.

Pārvati's hair has a natural perfume. The ancient *Śiva Purāṇa* even speaks of a wager on this controversy by two holy figures. One said that a flowery perfume could be natural to the hair of the Goddess, while the other, who said that perfume had to be put there and could not be natural, lost the wager. Thus the flowers of Indra's garden could have a superior fragrance, but they would vie with her natural perfume only in vain. The dispute according to Advaita, however, is not to be settled in favor of one or the other. There is a darkness to be banished independently of the value of the rival perfumes which is a lesson to be

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learned, and not a question of giving a prize to one of the rivals in a contest. It is true that, methodologically, ontology is more important, so the prize would legitimately go to the natural perfume of the hair of the Goddess rather than to the derived perfume of the blossoms of Indra's garden. It is the doctrine that teaches the lesson, not the method of arriving at the doctrine that is important for us.

Banishing darkness is the main subject of this verse, but where does this darkness reside? The verse itself replies that it is within all of us. It is not the darkness of individuals, some of whom might be more intelligent than others, but a general darkness applicable to all human beings at all times that is under reference here. An educated man might overcome this darkness and become enlightened, though this accomplishment would only be like a flashlight to him on a misty night. There is a general philosophical darkness in which humanity as a whole could be thought of as being steeped in from the beginning of time. One sparrow cannot make a summer. The blue of the sky is an example of such an ignorance applicable to all humans collectively. Blueness is not really there in the sky, but our error in appraising the blueness which is not there, reveals this principle of darkness in a general philosophical sense. It is such a blind or double darkness that is represented here by the glossy dark hair of the Goddess. An intelligent man might direct a flashlight at the face of the Goddess in order to see its bright beauty and to appreciate it, but beyond the range of the flashlight everything is still steeped in a form of primordial double darkness. In this verse the double epithets "blooming blue lotus forest" and "thick, glossy and lustrous" underline the double ignorance with which humanity is collectively cursed, such as in concupiscence, which is not the error or sin of any individual.

By the combined presence of two kinds of flowers we have tried to distinguish that by double negation Advaitic cancellation would take place, by which even this double darkness of a primordial nature, lodged deep within the collective psyche of mankind, could be abolished (by a kind of "dive-bombing"). In this verse we have descended from the ruby crown of Verse 42

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to the hair, which is not fully within the body limits of Devi. We descend one step more, hierophantically, when speaking of the face in the next verse. Plant life and animal life have a continuity between them which is like that between hair and face, when placed in a vertical descending series.

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tanotu kṣemam nas tava vadana saundarya laharī
parīvāha srotas saraṇir iva sīmanta saraṇiḥ
vahantī sindūram prabala kabarī bhāra timira-
dviṣām vṛndair bandīkṛtam iva navīnārka kiraṇam.

May it bless us—the upsurging billow of the beauty of your face
Outflowing like unto a stream to resemble your parted hairline
Bedecked with vermillion dust, keeping apart the strong
growth of tresses,
Held as if in bondage by an antidarkness gang, to reveal the
tender rays of dawn.

In Verse 44 there is a direct reference to the *saundarya* element, which labels this section definitely, as against the *ānanda* of the previous section. We can read this verse together with Verse 45, as they are almost identical in their subject matter which is the bright *cakra*-like face of the Goddess.

While Verse 43 spoke in terms of banishing darkness, here the prayer is for Beauty to bless humanity. It is not a passive picture that is presented here. The last line suggests that there are two groups of people trying hard to keep at least a streak of light visible, while darkness in its turn is trying forcibly to enter into every nook and corner of our consciousness, when it is allowed to be lazy. Siva killed the elephant Gajendra in order to conquer his own mystical heights by an agonizing tragic process, without which horizontal evil or ignorance—represented by the wild elephant gone out of control—would hinder the higher flights of contemplative life. The 'anti-darkness gang' here is clearing the thick forest growth, binding it down on both sides, so as to blaze the trail for higher and higher contemplation to follow vertically upwards. A thin line, if it could be marked to indicate the course of contemplative progress the yogi must follow, would in itself constitute a great gain. The situation

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suggested is not unlike the one that we could see when the king comes in a procession, in which a gang of policemen are pushing aside the crowds on both sides to keep them from blocking the road in front of the king. The vertical parameter must be clearly visualized by the yogi before the *cakra* itself could be placed in its proper relational perspective. Darkness is the enemy of light; its invasion is in terms of space encroached from both the sides and not in terms of time, which marks the path of light as it extends from the present towards doomsday itself. Thus the function of the anti-darkness gang is only to help the yogi to meditate better, which is the object of this verse.

The beauty of the face is not the plain conventional beauty, but something that can burst through barriers or other factors of ignorance, however thick. The mixed metaphor here even allows us to imagine that the face could be a lotus lake bordering on a forest touched by the pink rays of the rising sun situated vertically above it. Such a picture was presented in Verse 16. The water in a lake can break its bounds and create a stream vertically, ending at a vanishing point where the sun's rays stream downward, as in this verse. The parameter would then become complete from both ends, the immanent and the transcendent. The only color that would suit such a glistening streak of light would be vermillion or ruby or other magenta colors which have brilliance, rather than just a tint or shade. Such a structural version of a vision here is to be referred back to the familiar habit of Indian women to put a streak of *kumkum* (vermillion powder) on the line of their parted hair, plaited on both sides or simply kept bound and apart, as by the efforts of the anti-darkness gang here. The *kumkum* powder used by the Goddess touches that color where hypostatic beauty cancels against its own hierophantic counterpart.

A thick growth of hair in a woman indicates richness of the vital principle, and there is no harm in thinking that it adds to beauty rather than subtracts from it. It is in this sense that perhaps *La Gioconda* of Leonardo is an improvement on pale pre-Raphaelite Madonnas.

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arāḷais svābhāvyād aḷikaḷabhasa śrībhir aḷakaiḥ
parītam te vaktram parihasati paṅkeruha rucim
darasmere yasmin daśana ruci kiñjalka rucire
sugandhau mādyanti smaradahana cakṣur madhu lihaḥ.

Your face—exuding perfume as it gently smiles,
Having your bright teeth for filament, surrounded by your natural curls
Like so many revelling honey-licking bees, each the eye
Of the Burner of Eros—puts to shame the beauty of the lotus.

The brightness of the face of a woman has been compared to the beauty of the lotus flower almost to the point of surfeit in Sanskrit poetry. The moon is another favorite analogy. A clear complexion and evidence of an intelligence fully alert or alive, with a touch of pink, rose or magenta, sets off the face in a context otherwise steeped in the double darkness of the tresses. By dark splendor, ignorance might come to its own as a form of tragic wisdom which, when further intensified, could become as good as a plus value, as justified in mathematics, logistics and even linguistics, where a negative multiplied by a negative results in a positive value.

If we consider the face as a *cakra* it would naturally occupy the *bindusthāna*, that is, the central locus of meditation or interest. There is a favorite way of describing the beauty of the face of a Goddess, conventionally developed through classical times by Sanskrit poets, the main ideograms of which are seen to be respected by Sankara in Verses 43, 44, 45. It is not just beauty by way of a single assertion that is thus intended to be brought into evidence; it is rather a deeper form of beauty which has a radiance in and of itself, whether in terms of double darkness or double assertion. The brightness is meant to be more so, and the darkness is to be doubly underlined. That is the reason why the poet insists on bumble-bees, on the pearly luster of teeth seen through parted lips, and on the curls that form a dark fringe all round the face to set it off like the moon

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against the background of a dark cloud. Here Nature is distorted and rearranged and not just feebly imitated, as presupposed in the Aristotelian theory of art, where art is just an imitation of Nature. To Plato art is an imitation of an imitation, and Nature need not be presented with any photographic correctness of detail. Both photographic and holographic versions are to be respected here as laser technique is being introduced into photography. With these correctives in mind, we can see each line of this verse leap into a new depth of meaning.

We note first that the perfume of the flower is not omitted from this picture of beauty, for beauty is a value inseparable from the function of the rest of the senses. Honey sweetness, flower perfume, ruby brilliance, and moonlight glory are all enjoyable aspects of beauty, each lending its depth or other dimensions to the total appeal. The revelling bees, because they are restless and agitated, are suggested as the enjoying factor and natural counterpart of the enjoyment principle. This enjoying factor is carried over to the eye of Siva, situated above, which enjoys the beauty and looks down to the bees, whose eagerness to drink the honey, when totalled up, would amount to his own intense interest to enjoy the same beauty, even though it might be in the form of a mirror reflection of his own beauty, as suggested in later verses. An ordinary lotus has only relative beauty belonging to the side of nature, but the beauty seen here by Siva's eyes is the result of an interaction between two aspects of the Absolute, and that is why it is said to put to shame the unilaterally understood beauty of the Absolute. Honey is more deeply situated than the perfume of a lotus. The filaments that represent the teeth here are also deeper than the perfume of the face. The locks of black curls form a fringe. The greedy middle eye of Siva and the two other eyes are on the side of the enjoyer rather than the side of the enjoyed. There is also a circle of excited honey-licking bees forming the same dark fringe of black hair all round. It is not difficult to see that it is a sort of *cakra* that the poet is trying to reconstruct—a positive one here, instead of a negative one proper to the *Ānanda Laharī* section. While the negative one was proper to that negative context, the philosophical version is superimposed onto the sense version here, while there it was the given experience that was interpreted in terms that resemble an actual vision.

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lalāṭam lāvaṇya dyutivimalam ābhāti tava yad
dvitīyam tan manye makuṭa ghaṭitam candra śakalam
viparyāsa nyāsād ubhayam api sambhūya ca mithas
sudhālepasūtiḥ pariṇamati rākāhimakaraḥ.

I fain would treat your forehead, shining with a pure beauty,
As a second crescent to that other frail one fixed to your crown,
So that, reversed in position, with both knit one-to-one,
The form of a fully matured moon results, emanating soft ambrosial essence.

Verse 46 speaks in terms of two inverted crescents. The forehead here could make a crescent with its horns turned downward. The crescent fixed to the crown of Siva or Pārvati, as the case may be, has to be turned 180 degrees before the magic indened here could be accomplished. We are familiar with this turning at two right angles in physics and mathematics in varied contexts. For instance, polarized light gives different interference figures when the polarizer and the analyzer are placed at angles between 45 degrees and 180 degrees. The magic of the interference of double-polarized lights adds wonder to the beauty of mineral crystals.

In this verse it is a question of being able to see Absolute Beauty, and not beauty as a unilateral value. Therefore Sankara indulges in giving detailed instructions to the reader so that the perfect Beauty value intended here could result from a common sense vision when fully revised and corrected in the light of Advaitic doctrine. The raw materials and the finished product have to be put together unitively. In the theological context, it is enough to decorate Siva and Pārvati with a thin crescent at the omega point. But Vedanta is not limited to theological adorations. It must reveal the plenitude of an Absolute Value in the context of immortality and not in the context of relativistic *samsāra* (process of cyclic becoming). It is notenough to worship either Siva or Pārvati as exalted divine personalities, abstracted and lifted out of the world of necessity. It is the normalized vision of Plenitude that counts, although one-sided versions might still be dear to religious or theologically minded persons who want a favorite deity *(iṣṭa devatā)* to adore.

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47

bhruvau bhagne kiñcid bhuvana bhayabhaṅga vyasanini
tvadīye netrābhyām madhukara rucibhyām dhṛtaguṇam
dhanur manye savyetarakara gṛhītam ratipateḥ
prakoṣṭhe muṣṭau ca sthagayati nigūḍhāntaram ume.

Oh Uma, ever pained in concern for banishing the fear of
all creatures,
And thus with eyebrows somewhat arched, with eyes of
beelike beauty below,
I surmise that they make up the bowstring for the bow
Of the Lord of Love, held by his other hand, his arm and fist
hiding the middle part.

We have explained that in this second half of the work, Sankara depends more on constructing and superimposing new imagery on the Beauty of the Goddess as given to the senses in a more primary sense. Thus, we have seen that the twelve suns had to be fused into a gem of ruby color, and Indra's bow was made to dominate such a gem in Verse 42. In Verse 43, two sets of flowers had to occupy the same tresses of the Goddess. The parted hairline became the prolongation of the vertical axis in Verse 44, while a row of honey-licking bees was suggested as a perimeter-like line of reference in Verse 45. Two crescents were requisitioned again in Verse 46 so that, like brackets turned inversely, they could contain an Absolute Value, both real and imaginary at once. This complex metaphor, developed stage by stage, is carried over here into Verse 47, and the same structural pattern is to be respected in the remaining verses, the evidence of which will be found explicitly in Verses 58 and 59.

The darts of the God of Love that can pierce the hearts of persons involved in an erotic world of love is an image not peculiar to Sanskrit literature only. The celebrations of Saint Valentine's Day, as known to the West, use the same imagery. Eroticism is the natural setting for the appreciation of beauty. A

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masculine beauty and a feminine beauty belong to the same context of Absolute Beauty. Siva represents the eternal Masculine aspect while Pārvati represents the eternal Feminine. The function or operation of love has to have its instruments. Statically viewed, we get only non-living perspectives, as in the case of physiology studied by the dissection of dead bodies. The functioning of the living nerves comes to light only when we examine living bodies. This distinction could be said to be the same as that which can assume to exist between psychostatics and psychodynamics. Here the static picture is first to be understood in dim outline on the basis of this given empirically-based picture, and it is for us to superimpose another picture more mathematically understood. There are subtle parameters and perimeters to be kept in mind if we are to visualize Absolute Beauty with all its living or dynamic implications. This is a difficult task, and any poet or author who can take up this challenge will have to respect the rules or norms of both mathematics and mysticism at the same time.

One could look at the locomotive of an express train and recognize the cylinder, piston rod and the big weighted engine wheels, as the train starts or slows down. Instead of watching the engine from the platform, from inside the compartment one could feel the jolting alternating movements in terms of his own life movement. One could sympathize with the movement of the train and his own movement with shut eyes, establishing a bipolar sympathy between the engine and its troubles on one side and his own inconveniences to keep steady in his seat on the other. We have to superimpose on the mechanical picture another structural image representing the dynamic one in which the movement is understood by empathic intuition. Thus we can get two pictures which we subjected to a certain degree of subjectivity, without which they would refuse to belong together or make any meaning. These are some of the requirements for understanding this verse and the many that follow. The laws of nature could be treated in the form of propositions or predications, or we could use the language of graph paper. Every formula has got its corresponding graph; the graph verifies the formula and vice versa.

Sankara is faced with the task of revealing the dynamism of Absolute Beauty. In the first half of this verse, we notice that

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it is not just erotic love that is the basis of the emotional life reflected in the face of the Goddess. Her eyebrows are said to be slightly arched. Because Siva represents the positive side of the process of universal becoming, the Goddess has to represent the negative counterpart of the same function. If Siva is the God of the universe, it follows that Pārvati is in charge of saying that all living creatures on earth get a chance to have a life more abundant. She does not love one creature more than another. This absolute Love at the basis of her eroticism is not a mere preference for her husband. God is good and generous, while being the principle of light or intelligence. The Quran insists in bringing these two aspects of generosity and logical truth together in almost every one of its verses by the epithets *rahman* and *rahīm*, which are to be repeated together before each verse is read. The kindness of God or his goodness could be understood as an adjective or as a noun, as when we say "God is good" or "God is Goodness itself". The predicative and nominative aspects belong to the same Absolute Value represented by Siva and Pārvati thought of as one non-dual life Value, which was our starting postulate even from the very first verse of this work. The duality between the functions of Siva and Pārvati, if it comes into evidence here and there in these verses, is meant to be only for purposes of discussion, and the intelligent reader must cancel out these dialectical functions in terms of Absolute Beauty, of which the Goddess is a more fitting custodian than the God. However, the same Beauty could be discussed from a perspective more pronounced in favor of Siva, which has been done by Sankara in the conjugate of this composition, the *Śivānanda Laharī*. The arched eyebrows constitute the perimeter indicating the concern of anxiety of the Goddess. Here beauty is enhanced by such a concern for living beings.

No beauty can be said to exist without somebody to enjoy it. The rows of bees as a bowstring represent a parameter which is related to the perimeter of the bow. The analogy becomes more apt when we know that the bow of Kāma (Eros) is not merely one of wood or metal but consists of all the best flowers of the season. The desire of the bees to drink the honey of such a beautiful rainbow-like festival of flowers, meant for them to enjoy there, develops a vertical tension between the two counter-

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parts, viewed in abstracted and generalized terms. If there is no summer, there is no lovemaking, and the cuckoos cannot mark the arrows flying between the two sides that represent the highly emotional state of mystical eroticism. We have to imagine in this verse the arrow which the right hand of the God of Love is supposod to be secretly fixing onto the bowstring. This part is hidden by the left fist and the forearm with the elbow, which together mark the noseridge and center of the eyebrows. One can pull the string downward along this line with more or less force, depending upon the tension belonging to the situation. Psychodynamic aspects become revealed in this manner. To try to describe them through definitions or predications would give us only various static cliches instead of the real process with all its vitalistic implications. The bow could be fixed vertically when aimed toward Siva at the omega point, or it could be aimed horizontally through the side glances of the Goddess, when and if she condescends to grant her grace to some supplicant like Viṣṇu, or Kāma, or even Sankara, all of whom are mentioned as votaries of absolute Beauty in the different verses of this work. In Verse 75 and again in Verse 98, Sankara himself prays for this kind of horizontal side-glance recognition from Devi. Viṣṇu does the same more directly in Verse 5, and Kāma triumphed over the world because of the same light falling on his body from Devi's side-glance in Verse 6. We have to notice also that the eyes of the Goddess are sometimes compared to bees in a row, and sometimes to highly active bees who are agitated because of the absolute Compassion or Love which constitute their motivating function in the context of the Absolute. In Verse 45, the Devi's eyes were seen to be interchangeable with those of Siva, because he, as her husband, is the final enjoyer of the Beauty of the lotus face of his beloved.

One could ask here how two eyes could form the string for a bow. The two eyebrows have to be joined together in the imagination, and the horizontal movements of the two eyes are to be seen intuitively as the string, completing the picture which poetic convention, as respected by a long line of Sanskrit poets, permits. The line could be hyperbolic or parabolic, an incomplete conic section—like a comet's orbit round the sun—when bowstring is pulled downward, but it is not necessary to suppose

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any such intention in the picture presented here. A normalized concern uniformly maintained is all that we have to associate with this picture.

The eyebrows are somewhat arched, but not fully arched. When fully arched, it would mean some conflict or dissention. As they are only somewhat arched, it is not personal passion with its preference that is to be supposed, but rather a general state of pity or mercy, called *misericorde* in French.

To understand the phrase "beelike beauty" we must understand that a bee has to look at something, because its function is intimately connected with beauty.

The use of the name "Umā" as the Goddess here means that she has no equal or other persons to rival her. Uma is very superior, the nearest to the *brahman* of Vedanta. She is the one in charge of all life functions, and is not limited to the Tantric context of falling in love with her beauty, as corrected here by Sankara.

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ahas sūte savyam tava nayanam arkātmakatayā
triyāmām vāmam te srjati rajanīnāyakatayā
trtīyā te drṣṭir daradalita hemāmbuja ruciḥ
samādhatte sandhyām divasaniśayor antara carīm.

That eye of yours, in essence the same as the sun and other than the left,
Generates daytime; the left one, presiding over night, creates its three vigils;
While the third eye, sweet like a half-open golden lotus bud,
Ushers in the twilight time which moves between day and night.

In Verse 48 there is a pointed reference to the implications of what we have to understand as a verticalized version of a cosmological process. Under Verse 42, whether we think of the sun or the moon, or the light of the sacrificial fire placed in front of the votary, there are two rival versions possible for the process to be visualized. Day and night could be treated as mutually exclusive opposites. A second way would be to treat them unitively as alternating to succeed one another in time. Such an alternating process could further be accentuated and subjected to a more fully verticalized dynamism by which we could think of twilights common to twenty four hours or forty eight hours merging from both sides to fuse in terms of a continuous twilight. One unit of twilight would take over when the previous one is finished, to guarantee the continuity of their vertical participation day-in and day-out. Such a picture would be as true as any other so-called factual one. The difference is one of orientation only, and not of fact. The contemplative prefers the verticalized version rather than a merely mechanistic one. The life process extends to the beginningless past and to the endless future, so that questions of "destiny", "salvation", or "happiness of humanity" would come more completely into the picture. A piecemeal version of the same tends to be

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mechanistic and cuts off the day of judgment or the source of human life from such a cross-sectional view.

Devi has two eyes placed horizontally and also a half-open golden lotus bud-like third eye which is meant to see yogic visions rather than mere brute facts. The lotus is a flower that is normally pink, but twilight hours can add a tinge of golden orange to the pink color. The half-openness of such a third eye resembling the bud of a lotus flower touched by colors of the twilight hour, represents the contemplative state of the yogi's mind as it penetrates deeper into the future from the darkness of previous day/night units fused together in terms of twilight.

The object of this verse is to present a contemplative version of light, applicable to the consciousness of a yogi, irrespective of the event as such, but without contradicting the factual features. Classroom physiography may not tally with the version presented here, but that does not necessarily mean that this version is therefore unscientific. Thermodynamic laws are not seen operating in the laboratory, but still physicists make such generalized statements as, "The entropy of the universe is tending to zero." A structuralized way of thinking is already treated as permissible in modern physics, which speaks of involution and evolution, implosion and explosion, endosmosis and exosmosis, space and anti-space and "big bang" and "steady state," in a world of spectroscopic Doppler effects, referring to expanding or contracting universes based on an overall law of conservation of energy. All this is not usually questioned by orthodox physicists.

In this verse one of the eyes of the Goddess, which need not necessarily be the right eye but should not be identified with the left, derives its essence from the sun. The sun is a positive luminary in the sky, and its function is best recognized at midday. Side by side, with this positive status, one has to think of the other celestial orb, which takes charge of the night, which Keats described as "that orbed maiden with white fire laiden, whom mortals call the moon." Shakespeare has called it "the watery moon." The sun is hot, while the moon is cold in contemplative physiography. The moon might have phases, but it does not shine during the daytime. Lovers feel happier in moonlight than in sunlight. The gentle beams of the moon are

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a kind of food for love, but the position could sometimes be reversed when lovers suffer the cruel pangs of seperation. In *Śākuntaḷam* Duṣyanta complains that the flowery beam of moonlight become like cutting diamond-pointed arrows when Śakuntaḷa's favor is not known to him. Erotic poetry and contemplative structuralism both agree in placing these celestial orbs at two opposite vertical limits, or by way of concession, as it were, as two orbs placed in a relation reflecting "parity" instead of the relation called "handedness." These are all structural problems which are far from being finally settled by physicists. The "fall of parity" has been celebrated more than once in some centers of scientific research. We cannot wait for them to settle their disputes to say that a four-fold structuralism, respecting horizontal "parity" and vertical "handedness," is permissible to us to concede to absolute Space. Newton and Kant have stood for such an *a priori* absolute Space, while modern physicists, viewing the same from a relativistic perspective, tend alternately to abolish it and to accept it again in a modified form a decade later. The structure is finally what we put there, taking it from our minds, and also what we find "over there" independently of our minds. The paradox is not likely to get abolished by itself, as long as one has to think to find the truth. The effort of thought can only dance between the two possible alternatives. Unitive understanding alone can cancel out the prejudices proper to the Self or to the non-Self, to take us beyond paradox. Sankara's Vedanta claims to do just this, and this verse can be said to be preparing the ground for such a conclusion. The *a priori* and the *a posteriori* are both acceptable to Advaita Vedanta.

The question might be put: "Why not the right eye?" This is because even the sun can be transcended when positive luminaries with more powerful light could be substituted for it at a higher point in the vertical axis. The moon's position is nearer home to us and thus comparable more definitely to the left eye of the Goddess, because there are not other luminaries between the fire on earth and the light of the moon, which is brought near to life everyday. Our moon and our sun tend to come together the more we descend from the teleological to the ontological limit.

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The reference to the three vigils of the night is to show that our consciousness passes through three different kinds of contents when we sleep at night. The early part of the night is generally spent in banishing the fatigue of the day. The second vigil could be ascribed as semi-conscious, though equally restful. The third vigil is when angles begin to sing or the evil spirits decide to depart, as in the case of King Hamlet's ghost. The cock is meant to crow to punctuate the vigils, especially of the morning hours, and the crucifixion is also connected with such divisions known to literature.

It is the subconscious mind that is influenced by moonlight. Virtuality gets first accentuated, and negativity of subconscious states of dream or deep sleep take over as night advances and sleep becomes not merely physical in its function. The horizontal alternation in which celebration is either positively or negatively accentuated could come together without the celebration being accentuated in any pronounced manner. Equally transparent states of mind thus can take charge of the consciousness at different nightly vigils, under the influence of the moon rather than the sun.

When the coalescing of these two alternating processes becomes more and more visually transparent to each other, we can imagine a creeper with two branches. When such a creeper bears a contemplative golden lotus bud between the eyebrows of the yogi, as suggested in this verse, waking and sleeping are both abolished in terms of an ever-wakeful contemplative state which is sometimes referred to as "the fourth," or *turīya*. The dynamism of this fourth state can still move vertically up or down in terms of twilight, rather than of contrasting day and night. The last line here implies this state of mind. Narayana Guru describes a similar picture of contemplation in his *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* (Verse 9) thus:

> He who dwells in contemplation beneath a tree
> Whereon climbing, a creeper bears aloft on either side
> The blossoms of the psychic states mark, such a man
> By inferno unapproached ever remains.

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viśālā kalyāṇī sphuṭa rucir ayodhyā kuvalayaiḥ
kṛpādhārā dhārā kim api madhurā bhogavatikā
avantī dṛṣṭis te bahunagara vistāra vijayā
dhruvam tat tan nāma vyavaharaṇa yogyā vijayate.

Viśāla (the expansive), Kalyāṇi (the auspicious), Sphuṭaruci (the clear of taste), Ayodhyā (the invincible) due to the blue lotus, Kṛpādhārādhārā (on mercy's fountain founded),
A certain Madhura (the sweet), Avanti (of saving power), Bhogavatika (enjoyment offording)—
All such cities of lasting fame *(vijaya)*, each fit to be called by its own name, within your total regard do they triumphantly reign.

In Verse 48 we have seen how textbook physiography can be viewed in a verticalized perspective. Plainer geography, as it might apply to a country, could also be viewed from a contemplative standpoint. It is a subjective and axiologically baised view that we have to take of a country which might consist of many famous cities, however varied, whether large or small, which could be brought under eight classes representing human interests in which enjoyer and enjoyed could meet, so as to make a beauty factor emerge into view.

Each city is a state of mind, representing a dominant interest associated with its origin, its present utility, or a future destiny toward which it paves the way for its inhabitants. Thus revised subjectively in value terms, all cities of any country could be thought of individually or collectively together. In the subcontinent of India, many holy places have thus grown up through history, and places of pilgrimage attract travellers in large numbers even today. In a contemplative geography of this kind it is the Absolute Beauty value that counts, under whose aegis the eight varieties of interests, here recognized by the names of eight interesting cities, could be contemplatively reviewed.

The idea of eight cities representing the totality of contemplative consciousness is well known in Vedantic literature. Sankara describes in his *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, the *puryaṣṭakam* (collection of eight cities) as constituting the subtle contemplative body that we could arrive at by a certain kind of abstraction and

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generalization. This is the method we have to apply in all these verses to extract the contemplative version of a given factual situation. In Verse 50 and following verses, we must consider further abstractions, such as the nine aesthetic interests that we could distinguish in art or literature. This verse prepares the way for such a generalized treatment by telling us that the regard of Devi could suggest values which represent psychic states or attitudes, which, when put together, could apply to the contemplative votary or to the Goddess herself, at once or alternatively, in the world of religious pilgrimage among the holy cities of India. It is the enjoyment that represents the regard, or the eye that recognizes beauty. Happiness or salvation is the overall ground on which beauty can loom into consciousness, in the same way that a bright flower on a lotus plant can enter into the foreground or background of the mind as we meditate upon it, sometimes experiencing clarity of vision and at other times experiencing dim states of mind, having a retrospective or prospective suggestibility. Some kind of happiness relevant to the context of spiritual progress is to be represented by each blossom, interchangeably understood as the regard, or grace, or an eye of the Goddess, having a one to one correspondence with the contemplative joy within the consciousness of the yogi.

In the *Ānanda Laharī* section, a similar structural analysis was undertaken in Verse 32, with the help of other monomarks. Here we are dealing with a more objective and open world, where places of pilgrimage, rather than the world of icons, are proper to the present context.

When we think of the relationship of cities to human life, it can be generally said that cities are originally founded, if we trace their history, to the existence of some source or water supply, which is the most essential of value to attract human life around it. The fountain thus represents the grace of kindness of the Goddess, and such a central interest lends its genetic coloration to any city, even after it has grown through centuries on the basis of the same starting factor. It is a continuous streak or stream of value that has made a city famous.

Scrutinizing the content of this verse, we notice that the first-named famous city is Viśālā, meaning "the expansive". Heaven is sometimes referred to as being *viśālam*, as in the Bhagavad Gita, expansiveness being suggestive of the plentiful-

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ness of opportunities to make a living. In contrast with this first line, the last line refers to all cities bundled up together and treated as belonging to the total regard of Devi. The values that all the cities are meant to represent are evident from the root meanings or derivations of the Sanskrit terms contained in their very names. Commentators have also suggested that a beautiful woman could display eight kinds of recognizable attitudes in her changing looks, revealed by her eyes which could be half shut or fully open. Lotus buds and flowers could represent such innate open attitudes, totalling up to the Absolute Beauty that is the subject matter or object matter of this verse.

After the attribute of expansiveness comes auspiciousness, followed by clarity of taste. We can easily place these three in a numerator group. The second line represents the values that are to be carefully protected against invasion from outside. *Ayodhyā* suggests an invincible city, like a beautiful princess confined to a tower. Knights errant have to fight battles to win such a beauty value.

In the third line, the interest is based on enjoyment. Each city has got its pleasure of daytime and of nighttime, as in "gay Paris." Mathura in North India, or Madurai in South India, derive their names from the sweet associations of those places.

The last line of this verse tells us how to put all expansive values, such as that of heaven, together into one big ensemble, and how to view such a treasure of value as pertaining to the total regard or grace of the Goddess of Beauty, with whom we are always to be concerned. The heaven of the first line is to be included in the cup of total Absolute Value implied in the last line, where it is also suggested that each name is to be treated as a noun as well as having a predicative significance. To extract the central value here requires special effort of abstraction and generalization on the part of the student or contemplative for whom this verse might apply. If he is able to rise to such a requirement, it would be easier for him to follow the thinner suggestion and generalization contained in the next section of verses (50-60), in which we could say that the structural way of poetic composition sometimes even excels itself by the elusive thinness of its suggestibility. Nominalism and structuralism can also be seen hand in hand here.

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50

kavīnām sandarbha stabaka makarandaika rasikam
kaṭākṣa vyākṣepa bhramara kaḷabhau karṇa yugaḷam
amuñcantau dṛṣṭvā tava navarasāsvāda taraḷāv-
asūyā samsargād alika nayanam kiñcid aruṇam.

Seeing your young-bumblebee-like pair of eyes—which, while seeming to cast side-glances,
Do not give up the bases of your ears, mellowed by the play of the nine aesthetic interests,
Remaining like aptness with poets, wholely absorbed in drinking of the honey within a spray of blossoms—
Your mid-forehead lotus bud eye, touched by jealousy, seems magenta tinged.

In Verse 50 the abstraction and generalization applied to value factors of geography or physiography is carried over from the previous verses to an even more thin and elusive domain where poets are engaged in finding apt analogies when they play with the nine aesthetic interests which constitute the stock and trade of their art. A vibrating magnetic needle can be imagined as slanting 90 degrees to the right or 90 degrees to the left, according to the aptness of the analogies that the poet might employ in his art. In this way the whole range of the nine interests could be imagined at every 10 degrees on either side, thus filling the whole 180 degrees above the horizontal straight line. When aptness succeeds, the pointer may be said to stabilize itself with an equilibrium point ranging from left to right, covering all possible points between the limits of −90 and +90. In this verse the eyes are compared to young bumble-bees who are very impatient to enjoy the honey within a spray of blossoms. The blossoms could be at the positive end of the horizontal axis, or virtually enjoyable at the negative end as when through apt analogies we appreciate good poetry. Both could be equally sweet to the young bumblebees as they actively

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flit between the actual and the virtual interests in the domain of poetic appreciation. We have also to carry over from Verse 48 a middle eye as a witness to the playful eroticism in which the other two ordinary eyes are likely to indulge. The ordinary eyes can express their interest normally by coquettish side glances. The serious middle eye does not approve of such fickleness on the part of these younger ones. Such is the background on which the dynamism of the structure here is to be superimposed, playing on the living beauty of the face of the Goddess.

The reference to the base of the ears is justified by the fact that it is in this region that visual imagery transforms itself into auditory imagery of a more virtual order. There is a kind of figure-of-eight circulation taking place where alternating interests, virtual or actual, visual or auditory, change sides and play, as it were, a constant game of hide and seek. Aptness is always the constant factor that constitutes the interest. The highest sense of aptness, however, is ashamed of its own fickleness when viewed from a horizontalized perspective.

The young bumblebees here, which refer to the two eyes, are said to be highly interested in looking slantingly, with the ear bases as a reference. Eroticism being natural to youth, enjoyment of the honey is all they care for, resulting in the fickle form of a vibrating needle which stabilizes itself only at the zero point or at the 180 degree limits, where the ear bases transform visual into auditory impulses and vice versa.

The central eye, carried over from Verse 48, is not golden in color, as it was in that verse. By resentment of the shameful conduct of the fickle-minded young bees, a red color invades the central lotus bud eye. The aptness of the analogy of Sankara here makes this color correspond to the jealousy which arises from the resentment natural to a more mature and dispassionate person whom we could call the Absolute Female, for which principle the Goddess here would stand. She is jealous only in proportion to the restless fickleness of the younger bees, who are excited and therefore incapable of any steady contemplation. Steady contemplation corresponds to the vertical parameter, but fickleness oscillates between the positive and

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negative horizontal limits. When jealousy is cancelled against fickleness, the resultant is the neutral Absolute represented by the Beauty of the face of the Goddess.

The expression "seeming to caste side glances" would suggest that sometimes side glances could be justified, but not all the time as the young folk might claim or pretend. The ear region is further qualified in the vertical axis as "mellowed" or made more sensitive by their constant interest in aesthetic enjoyment. This seems to suggest that mere dilettantism cannot produce the same eujoyment as the fully matured taste of a person of artistic appreciation. The young bees refuse to leave the base of the ears because they are able to appreciate art in its full value or import, and not merely as persons with a passing interest in it. Side glances are respectable and become interchangeable with this end of serious interest in art. Pretension of one for the other thus becomes possible, and the element of pretense found in the text therefore becomes justifted. The bees are not conferring grace on any one with a really serious side glance. They are only enjoying the erotic play of this. The ear bases, which are the center of aesthetic interest, could be centralized together and the fanwise expansion of the various items of interest, radiating and overlapping both ways, could all be bundled up into one master interest when a contemplative touch confers maturity upon the individual sentiments, and inclusively binds them together into an enjoyment with a central interest that knows no duality.

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51

śive śṛṅgārārdrā tad itara jane kutsana parā
saroṣā gaṅgāyām giriśa carite vismayavatī
harāhibhyo bhītā sarasiruha saubhāgya jananī
sakhīṣu smerā te mayi janani dṛṣṭis sakaruṇā.

Moved by sentimental love for Siva, resentful to any other person,
With anger of jealously toward Ganga, with transportations of wonder at Siva's story,
With fearful surprise at the snakes of Hara and for friends a jestful smile—
As a source of lotus-red grace, your regard, Oh Mother, for me will remain one of kindliness.

Sanskrit poetic convention defines rhetorical literature as being based upon certain classes of interest called *rasas,* which are said to be between eight and ten in number. Two of them can be considered as extras, but when one or the other of these is included with the eight (or excluded from the ten), we get nine *rasas (navarasas)*. Rhetoric in the Western world usually refers to classifications such as lyric, heroic, tragic, romantic and so on. As we explained in Verse 38, in Sanskrit the ten basic interests are *śṛṅgāra* (love), *vīra* (heroism), *bībhatsa* (disgust), *raudra* (anger or fury), *hāsya* (mirth), *bhayānaka* (terror), *karuṇa* (pity), *adbhuta* (wonder), *śānta* (tranquility or peacefulness) and *vātsalya* (paternal fondness). The last two are sometimes omitted and sometimes only one of them is included. Fear and pity are attitudes or states of mind which are supposed to be induced by Greek tragedy.

It is not a question, in this work, of depicting a perfect picture of beauty or goodness. All the attitudes, passions or states of mind are to be included together irrespective of whether they enhance the goodness of the character in question. In this sense, in Western literary criticism it is understood that poetry is

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a criticism of life, and that it holds up a mirror reflecting life, whether in society or in oneself. The goddess of Beauty of these verses becomes perfect to the extent that she comprises within her personality all the attitudes or states of mind which basically constitute what we know as human life in general. It is in this sense, then, that in this verse all psychic states, whether good or bad, are passed in review in a certain order. It is not hard to recognize in the series of emotions or passions described here that the nine *rasas*, or interests, are being treated of in the abstract. It is the mood induced within the psyche of the enjoyer and also what is in the subject matter of the poetry itself, which when treated together, give to these interests, passions, or attitudes an absolutist status, all to be comprised within the beauty of the same Goddess. Each passion enhances her beauty, instead of detracting from it, in the same way that the facets of a cut diamond can set off its attractiveness in a more pronounced form.

Jealousy normally cannot be considered as a good quality, but in this verse we find that the Goddess has a rival co-wife in Ganga (the goddess of the river Ganges), and that she is capable of jealousy with that other personified aspect of beauty. The paradoxical element within the Beauty of the Absolute is hereby confronted without any attempt to explain it away. The Absolute Beauty is beyond good and bad, and it is not just good. This is the reason why we find questionable attitudes being included here as adding to, instead of detracting from, the totality of beauty intended to be revealed. In other words, the Goddess is absolutely Beautiful in spite of blameworthy aspects in her nature. It is by transcending good and evil, not just by denying them, that perfection is to be attained. The three modalities of nature *(guṇas)*, as we shall see in the immediately succeeding verses, have also to be similarly transcended. The ontologically baised version of beauty which the Goddess here represents, as the consort of Siva who is her positive counterpart, would permit the inclusion of all modalities that are real to human nature. Even imperfections are thus included here so that they could be unitively absorbed and transcended by participation with the higher absolute principle that Siva represents. In this sense, Siva could be called an "Absolute of absolutes" while Pārvati's

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status could be described as the "relative Absolute". Even this duality could be abolished by mutual cancellation.

We notice that first the Goddess is capable of sentimental love toward her husband, as in the case of any other girl. This makes her fully human, and thereby adds to her perfection. We might add here that because her husband represents the most uncompromising absolutism her sentimental affection receives, by virtue of it, a certain dignity of its own, but basically the sentiment remains just human and nothing more. This revised form of sentimental love has already been referred to in Verse 16 as *gabhīra śṛṅgāra*, a revised form of profound erotic love.

Jealously in love has been condemned by poets like Tennyson as being incompatible with pure love. Here we find again that the Goddess is disgusted with all persons except Siva. So the poet has in mind here a certain higher type of jealousy which is one pointed and exclusive of all others, Siva being the absolute value dear to Pārvati. If one should love one's God with all one's heart, then a certain bipolarity of relationship is insured between the worshipper and the worshipped. The strictness of this bipolarity necessarily implies its corollary—a touch of exclusion of everything extraneous to such a vertical affiliation. It is in this sense that we have to understand the jealously and disgust of Pārvati for all personages except Siva. This is above good and bad; it is "Goodness". But rising to be good from being bad, in the Christian sense, is not profound enough.

The jealousy toward her rival, Ganga, which is only to be expected, reveals the relative status of Siva's two co-wives. While Ganga represents a horizontal value, as a geographical river useful to cultivators around Benares and other cities, Pārvati represents the very source of water in the sky. River water is as valuable as rain water but the dignity of the rain should not be mixed up with the earthy touch implied in the river. It is in the recognition of this contrast that the Beauty of the Goddess is intended to upsurge and overwhelm the contemplative student of these verses. Perfection by transcending is not the same as trying to merely improve on the already vitiated relativistic setup.

The next emotion is described as a "transportation of wonder" at the exploits of Siva. Saivite epics, especially of South India,

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tell of many "Dionysiac" mysteries in which Siva works wonders among the common people. All miracles are possible in the context of the Absolute. Nothing is impossible for Dionysus either. The wonder here thus belongs to a heightened transcendental order.

We find in the next line that fear and surprise are bracketed together as one sentiment. Devi, who is afraid of the snakes coiled around Siva's body, says, "How wonderful!" Instead of excluding each other, these sentiments blend with and complement each other.

The condescending smile toward younger rivals, who might be just incidental acquaintances shows that she is not equally resentful toward all her rivals. One has to make friends as well as enemies, but only with those who are worthy of such an equal status with oneself. This rule of reciprocity in friendship is mentioned in the *Pañcatantra*, where it suggests that friendship should be cultivated only with equals so as to avoid strained relations later.

The last line refers to the lotus-red grace of the eyes of the Goddess, where all these possible varieties of attitudes, sentiments or passions can have their source at one and the same locus.

The pointer of the emotional needle, which is verticalized at the beginning here with tender emotion, deflects to the right or left successively thereafter through the whole gamut of other relational attitudes, finally to descend onto the supplicant. This could be the author himself who highly deserves his own favorite form of recognition, which happens to be only a side-glance, but is no less dignified for that reason (as will be explained in Verse 57). Sympathy, compassion, pity, consideration for a servant or dependent, or for a supplicant, standing far off out of respect, are all to be imagined to be present in this special kind of regard of the Goddess. This absolutist dignity of the regard does not suffer, although it is expressed only in the form of a side-glance which seems to say, "I've not forgotten you." It is here that an overwhelming touch of Absolute Beauty is to be recognized by the critical student. Each of these emotions has an ordinary "human" aspect and a touch of verticality subtly transcending this ordinary aspect.

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Whether all the nine conventional *rasas* are respected by Sankara or not is not important here for us. Chemistry could be studied in an overall manner by scrutinizing the periodic table of elements as well as through details in a textbook. It is the global overall view of Beauty, in which the component parts are still recognizable, that is intended by Sankara to be revealed, particularly with reference to the lower or negative perspective of the Absolute, which is neither transcendental nor immanent, but normalized or renormalized befween the two limits. Over-focusing and underfocusing is an important point implied here.

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52

gate karṇābhyarṇam garuta iva pakṣmāṇi dadhati
purām bhettuś citta praśama rasa vidrāvaṇa phale
ime netre gotrādhara pati kulottamsa kalike
tavākarṇākṛṣṭa smaraśara vilāsam kulayataḥ.

Drawn fully to the ear limits like gleaming arrows of *Smara*
(Eros) with lashes looking like
Arrow-base feathers, these your eyes, having the effect
Of disrupting the complacent detachment of the City Burner,
Make for your glory as the highest of the clan of the
Mountain King.

Verse 52 requires a great deal of manipulation and structural construction or interpretation before it gives up its bare meaning. The gleaming arrows of Smara *(Kāma)* have first to be placed in the correct position before they can even have a chance of piercing the heart of the super-ascetic Siva. Even to think of the possibility of Smara being effective against such a superior target, we have to concede that the person who sends the arrow must himself have a dignity sufficiently rich. These requirements are carefully indicated by Sankara when he underlines in this verse that the City Burner, Siva, is normally detached and placed above the reach of interests that belong to the various grades of values ranged between heaven and earth. The three cities which Siva burned represent three such intermediate levels. As against such superior qualifications of the husband, what is the qualification on the side of Pārvati, which validates her as the rival counterpart of such an exalted value, raised above all earthy considerations? The answer is that Pārvati has the glory of being the highest descendent of the clan of the King of Mountains. As the daughter of the Himalayas, she presides over existential values, while Siva is in charge of corresponding subsistential values.

The main incident in this verse refers to some arrow being aimed in order to be sent with such an intensity and velosity

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that even the absolute dispassionateness of Siva will be ruffled. The conditions required for such a smiting arrow to succeed in hitting this difficult target are carefully elaborated here in proto-linguistic terms. The analogy of the bow and arrow playing on the face of the Goddess, placed in intriguing positions as if visible yet invisible, has been worked out in sufficient detail already in Verse 47. Kāma is well known in Sanskrit poetry. In Kāḷidāsa's masterpiece of mystical eroticism, the *Kumārasambhava*, the roles of Kāma and his wife Rati, as well as those of Siva and Uma, are described in great detail. The central tragedy in that famous heroic epic is the incident where the attempt of Kāma to ruffle the heart of the City-Burner suffers a signal failure. Instead of succeeding, Kāma is struck down by Siva's lightning and burnt to cinders. The section entitled *Rati-vilāpa* (Lamentations of Rati) reveals some precious structural details meant to show why Siva was able to burn her husband down. The arrow was not sent correctly and frontally, but from a hidden point of vantage which Kāma slyly selected, with no straighforward intention, and where he stood on one leg, peripherally situated from the place where Siva sat steeped in deep meditation. The poetic justice of a Kāḷidāsa considers that such a punishment was justified. A revised picture is then elaborately developed in the same work. It is only through the side glances of a beautiful woman that the arrows of love can operate on such a superior man as Siva. The beautiful woman involved in such a game must deserve on her part, by her nobility of origin at least, to send the arrows of Kāma, supported by her side glances—which have to act here as a medium to make them fly most effectively in the direction that would correctly hit the bull's-eye.

We read in *Kumārasambhava* that in the first part of her penance of propitiating Siva, Pārvati followed a ritualism which belonged to the hedonistic and relativistic context of Vedic sacrifice. Having failed by this approach, she lay fainting and was carried away by her father, like a wilted lotus flower carried in the tusks of an elephant. She is taken back to her parental home, horizontally, by the King of Mountains, instead of gaining what she badly wanted: the vertical home of her husband Siva. But she does not give up her austerities. This time she takes a revised and revalued Vedantic approach. She abandons luxuries

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and stands for forty days in water and follows a discipline which has, over and above the one-pointedness of Vedism, that touch of renunciation or sacrifice, which changes the complexion of her approach altogether. We have to keep in mind such details, well known to everyone sufficiently versed in Sanskrit lore, before we are able to reinterpret the meaning and structural implications of this verse.

The first half of this verse suggests something very difficult for us to imagine. We can understand how, when Kâma wants to send an arrow sideways to hit an ordinary target, he could intensify its velosity by drawing the bowstring farther backward, the ear being the limit to which the bowstring can be drawn. It is between the ear and the eye, then, as they jointly operate, that Kāma's arrows in the form of side glances can affect the ordinary level. But it pointedly says here that the arrows leave only a gleam in her eye, and that instead of the eyelashes being spread horizontally, they are all gathered together to resemble a bundle of arrow-base feathers which, we should suppose, are evidently used for giving piercing power and lightness to the arrows themselves which are very tender, being made of flowers. Kāma is sometimes called *pañcabāṇa* (the Five-darted One). Each dart is compared in Sanskrit literature to a favorite flower, such as the the lotus or the jasmine. The idea is that the five senses co-operate in the appeal for attention that the female principle invites to herself by her own beauty, through the intermediary of these flowers and their respective perfumes, colors or tenderness. Flower-tenderness is the nearest analogy to the existent aspect of Beauty. The glance of Siva on the numerator side is the target to be attained. This target, however, is of a conceptual order. Establishing a participation between the two aspects, the existent and the conceptual, contained within the totality of the occasionalism implied in the Absolute has been examined already in Verses 5 and 6.

The suggestion in Verse 47 that the left forearm hides the fixing of the arrow justified our structural analysis of this verse as belonging to a third dimensional epistemological level. The base of the ears, to which limit the bowstring has been drawn backward has to be placed within a conical section with an interior locus, rather than peripherally and horizontally, as in the

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case of the fusion of many twilights into one verticalized line of light suggested in Verses 42 and 48. We have to think in terms of a revised form of side glance, not only involving the five senses as five flowers—which would normally be sufficient for Kāma to operate—but we have also to place the ear limit of negativity in the subjective consciousness at a deeper locus where the mind, itself sometimes referred to as the sixth sense, is located as an inner organ or organon.

A beautiful woman's side glance becomes most powerful to the extent that this kind of verticalization and centralization, attaining to the sixth organ where concepts and percepts meet, could also come into play. There are superficial and deeper side glances, and Pārvati's side glance has her own wholehearted mind or personal consciousness behind it, although incidentally it is the same Kāma that is operating the instrument as in every other case of effective eroticism. The arrow-base feathers suggest a gleaming arrow that is fully imbedded and vertically poised within the solid conic structure that we are compelled to pre-suppose here. The feathers mark the negative terminus, and when the gleaming arrow and its terminus are alone visible, the negative appeal of the eternal Female for her counterpart may be said to have attained to its maximum effectiveness. By the same token, it becomes competent to disrupt the complacency or detachment of the most positive of transcendental principles, represented by Siva. The stage is thus set for the occasionalism to take place in the context of absolute erotic Beauty.

The expression *ime netre*, being gramatically in the dual case suggests that the two eyes have to be treated as functioning together in unison, in a horizontal setup. The positive and negative ends of the arrow have necessarily to point in opposite directions, so the eyes cannot be expected to have the same function of striking the heart of Siva. This is an additional reason for us to think that the structure has to be subjected here to a revision in terms of at least a three-dimensional solid structure, preferably one which has double-sided conical elements included within its purview. In short, it is only the verticalized version of the arrow and not its horizontal functioning that can fit into such a multi-dimensional dynamic situation.

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We could remark that in the previous verse the aesthetic interests, auditory or visual, could be seen either in double-fanwise expansion horizontally, or in a unitary verticalized version of the same. The two fan folds are dovetailed or telescoped into a bundle as one vertical master interest in erotic mysticism. This verse only carries over the same structural dynamism, to be imagined in highly vitalistic terms before being cancelled against its own conceptual counterpart. The norm is neither conceptual nor perceptual, neither visible nor invisible, but includes both alternately. Paradox, if it should persist, should abolish itself by a mutual transparency of light, as between existence and subsistence. The resultant would be the Absolute Beauty value which is the central theme throughout this work. The mind plays here between the two focuses of structural beauty and poetic actual beauty. The structural beauty is superimposed on top of the actual.

We could further note that the various attitudes of Devi have an organic sequence between them. The two eyes that are sentimentally, though negatively, focused on Siva must be in a kind of meditation between the eyebrows, making the eyelashes tend to come together at the corners of the eyes. The other sentiments or attitudes would pass through other angles, deflected in different degrees from this vertical starting position and finally end with a side glance grace alighting with sympathy on a dependent supplicant standing far off at the periphery. It is a horizontal side glance, rather than a frontal regard, that is thus vouchsafed to the devotee. Such a devotee is, in turn, more than satisfied with even this kind of recognition, because his devotion is able to magnify the value to its fullest possible limit. What is lost in quantity is gained in intensity. In effect, the light of the sun's orb and the beams that come out of it are the same. Substance and attribute thus can belong together.

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53

vibhakta traivarṇyam vyatikarita līlāñjanatayā
vibhāti tvan netra tritayam idam īśānadayite
punas sraṣṭum devān druhiṇa hari rudrān uparatān
rajas sattvam bibhrat tama iti guṇānām trayam iva.

The tricolor distinctness of your eyes, oh Beloved of Īśāna (Lord),
Presented in clear threefold relief by the playful use of collyrium,
Would seem to create afresh the gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Siva,
Bereft of passion and having the qualities of *rajas* (active), *sattva* (pure) and *tamas* (dark).

Verses 53, 54 and 55 bring us back to the question, though more indirectly, of transcending the three modalities of nature (*guṇas*). These modalities belong to the lower or relativistically qualified version of the Absolute. The non-relativistic version of the same, which is technically referred to as *para-brahman*, has only a conceptual content. The modalities of nature cannot be present in the world of concepts in any real sense. There is thus an epistemological turning of the tables, between the immanent and the transcendent versions of the value called Beauty, which we have to recognize as playing round the region of the eyes of the Goddess. In Verses 25 and 26, the relation between the three modalities and the three gods was employed to bring into dynamic relief the mode of operation of the three *guṇas*. Here in Verse 53, a color language is employed for describing the three *guṇas*, where *sattva* (the pure), *rajas* (the passionate), and *tamas* (the inert) correspond to the white, the red and the dark respectively. The mythological, the psychological and the color languages are all brought into interplay in this verse to reveal a kind of mesh-like crisscross dynamic frame, through which the tendencies involved have to pass so as to be transcended or sublimated. In Verse 54 another analogy is employed to describe the three modalities, where

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there is a confluence of three rivers having the same three colors. Finally, in Verse 55, transcending the modalities involves the crossing of a split-second gap between the creation and dissolution of the universe. The purpose of each of these three verses becomes clearer to the reader when the intention of transcending the modalities is kept in mind as the common theme running through all of them.

Here in Verse 53, being called the "Beloved of Īśāna" gives the Goddess a position intermediate between the operation of the three *guṇas* and the transcending of the same. The eyes of the Goddess present three colors: the pupils being black, the corners being red and the sclera white. The Goddess is pictured here as playfully adding her own eye pencil markings to enhance the contrast between the three colors. It is then suggested that such an enhancement is able to produce the three gods once again, from a background in which they existed in perhaps only a virtual form. Virtuality and actuality are conferred upon entities, divinities or tendencies, on final analysis, by the meeting of the two references which form between them a kind of matrix or lattice formation, also called a "grating" in crystallographic interference figures of optical motions. Some such idea seems to be in the mind of Sankara here, whether we take him to know these scientific notions as we know them now, or merely to understand the basic principle implied therein in a more vague intuitive form.

The last part of this verse qualifies the gods that thus emerge into view as bereft of passion, as the Sanskrit word *uparati* would suggest, *(rati* being translatable as "passion"). Thus there are gods capable of passion and gods who could be created again as passionless versions of themselves. Some commentators have suggested that antediluvian gods were passionate and after the deluge they became passionless at the instance of the Goddess. Such an interpretation would only be adding more mythology to the already vague mythological language. We prefer, therefore, to explain that the gods could function with a horizontal reference, or, when sublimated, could have a verticalized reference, being placed in the context of the beauty of the face of Pārvati. This sublimated state of the Goddess must be the result of the absolute quality of her medita-

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tion on her beloved God. The three modalities could have three colors as their monomarks, or three divinities taken from mythology or even three rivers, as in the next verse. What we should try to see in and through these stratifications, tending either to be abstract or concrete, particular or general, is the structural dynamism that is meant to be revealed in the process of transcending from the lower Brahman to the higher Brahman. There is, through intentionality, a possible position of participation in which both the vertical and the horizontal references are to be considered equally valid in revealing this structural dynamism underlying the frame of reference. The mythological picture is concrete and real, and can be said to be of the first dimension. The picture with nature-modalities is still vitalistically real and could be referred to as a second-dimensional setup. When these same factors are referred to in terms of color, they could be said to belong to a third-dimensional context. The voltage of intentionality could be further increased to abolish even the frame of reference into a fully fourth-dimensional context. When bathing in the confluence of the three rivers, as described in Verse 54, the pilgrim attains a sense of holiness or sanctification which is fully subjective, and by Verse 55 mythological realism is left far behind, in terms of an eternal present or eternal moment where creation and dissolution come together to participate on the most subtle of grounds, which is neither material nor mental.

The collyrium applied as decoration by the Goddess, out of playful love of enhancing her own beauty, is the numerator factor here, which puts the gods and the *guṇas* in a new and neutral setting that respects both horizontal and vertical values. How the three *guṇas* and the three gods are to be treated together has already been clarified in Verses 25 and 26. The passionless state has also been explicitly referred to in Verse 26. So, when previous lessons in the same textbook are fully respected, the validity of the lesson in this verse becomes sufficiently clear. It is by intentionality that one transcends the demands of the three nature-modalities. When such an intentionality applies to Siva himself, as the most positive of values, the sublimation takes place most effectively and correctly. It is the strict bipolar affiliation, to the exclusion of all extraneous interests, that can spell success in the contemplation of the Absolute.

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The "threefold relief" and the eventuality of the creation of the Gods bereft of passion could all be understood together if we should admit that the horizontalized version of value modalities of interest is re-oriented vertically due to the love of Pârvati for Siva. As between the three *guṇas* themselves, *rajas*, the middle one, is more fully horizontal than the other two. The complex mechanism to which these *guṇas* are subjected is the subject of the whole of Chapter 14 of the Bhagavad Gita, which could supplement what we have to say here. When *rajas*, the active, becomes bereft of passion, it would have the thinnest mathematical status possible, because essentially *rajas* refers to a horizontal function, and would accord with the function of Viṣṇu in mythological terms.

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pavitrīkartum naḥ paśupati parādhīna hṛdaye
dayāmitrair netrair aruṇa dhavaḷa śyāma rucibhiḥ
nadaś śoṇo gaṅgā tapanatanayeti dhruvam amum
trayāṇām tīrthānām upanayasi sambhedam anagham.

Oh One of Kindly Sympathetic Regard, whose heart is
Given over to the Lord of Beasts—the sacred waters of rivers
such as
Śona, *Ganga* and *Yamuna*, colored red, white and black,
You do indeed blend into sinless confluence for
our purification.

In Verse 54 we can at once recognize how the intensity of intentionality is further accentuated from the previous verse. The three colors of the eyes directed upward and concentrated between the eyebrows—where the third eye of Siva or Pārvati could be supposed to exist—because of the high degree of sympathy developed between them, could mark also the point of confluence of the three rivers having different colored waters. This apt analogy suggests that the modalities mix and merge, one neutralizing the other by being inclusively comprised under the master modality that comes by affiliation to the Absolute. Just as rivers cross the bar of an estuary, losing their names and forms, the modalities can attain the Absolute. Attaining the Absolute is the same as salvation, which implies in turn the purification from all sin. It is not difficult to see how this complex metaphor, which is more than a mere figure of speech, is carried over with a high degree of suggestibility from Verse 53 into this verse. The way of transcending instinctive conditionings is the main theme of this verse.

The reference to Siva as the "Lord of Beasts" is apt. The transition from the inanimate status of the Himālaya as a mountain, to his status as the father of Pārvati, via the world of animals, respects the natural hierarchy of values. Siva is the Lord of Beasts before becoming the City-Burner. The former implies ascent, while the latter implies descent.

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nimeṣonmeṣābhyām praḷayam udayam yāti jagatī
tavetyāhus santo dharaṇidhara rājanya tanaye
tad unmeṣād jātam jagad idam aśeṣam praḷayataḥ
paritrātum śaṅke parihṛta nimeṣās tava dṛśaḥ.

With eyes shut or open, you can effect, as saints say,
The being or non–being of the world, oh Daughter of the
Earth–supporting Lord;
This entire world, without anything left over, came into being
as you opened them;
To save it from dissolution, I now surmise, You remain
unwinkingly withdrawn.

In Verse 55 we are still concerned with attitudes connected with the language of the eyes of the Goddess. The gods of the Hindu heaven supposedly do not wink. Fish, which belong to the subhuman level, do not wink either. The meditative eyes of a Buddha are seen to be introspectively withdrawn into a half-open/half-shut condition. Besides the side glances of Devi, which can refer to particular interests the open or shut eyes could refer to a wholesale interest in the whole of creation. When her eyes are open the world presents itself; when they are closed it disappears. The simple act of opening and shutting the eyes thus has two opposite effects. Plato divides reality into two categories: the visibles and the intelligibles. The visible world and the intelligible world can alternate within consciousness in a similar way. We could call them with equal validity the observables and the calculables, percepts and concepts or forms and names, according to the particular philosophical context belonging to different historical, geographical or cultural expressions. If visibles have a horizontal reference, then calculables could be said to have a vertical reference.

Cosmologically speaking, there are many theories of creation and destruction found in myths, philosophies and sciences. God as a creator or maker, or as the Great Architect, is a theological, anthropomorphic version of creation. More philosophically biased schools would explain creation in terms of *vijñānavāda*,

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the rationalist school belonging to the Buddhistic context. Vedanta prefers to adopt the doctrine of *māyā vāda*, where indeterminism finds a place side by side with mere rationalism or empiricism. Evolutionism can color the same picture and give us an endless variety of theories. There is creative evolution, emergent evolution and parallel evolution, as well as Darwinian and Lamarckian theories, which all differ more or less from one another. Modern physics speaks of creation in terms of the "big bang" theory as against the "steady state" theory. It is not necessary for the purpose of this verse to enter into the details of all such theories. As Sankara stands for pure Advaita Vedanta it is our task here to see how far this picture of the Goddess creating and sustaining the worlds tallies with his theories as expounded in his great commentaries. A close scrutiny of this verse reveals that, in spite of resembling the theory of instantaneous creation familiar to us in the Buddhistic *vijñāna vāda* school, there is always the presence of an Absolute Goddess, whose function it is to create, maintain or withdraw at will. Buddhists do not recognize any such linking spiritual principle. This Vedantic view conforms to what is known as *vivarta vāda*, that is, reality treated as a phenomenal presentiment. According to Vedanta, evolution applies only to matter, as in the familiar example of milk turning sour. The spirit can know no such change. The world is "will and presentiment," as Schopenhauer puts it, and is thus comparable to a dream that can come and go without involving material change or decay. Such are some of the considerations with which we have to delimit the functions of the Goddess so as to fit them into the correct context intended here by the author.

The first line indicates that the theory presented in this verse is accepted by saints or wise men *(śāntaḥ)*. It thus belongs to a perennial philosophical context, even anterior to Sankara's own Vedanta. By opening her eyes, the Goddess brings the world into being as an overt reality. When she closes her eyes, the reality disappears and gives place to virtuality. According to Eddington, there could be four distinct chairs: a conceptual chair and a perceptual chair, an actual chair and a virtual chair. Each of these four chairs needs a corresponding man, abstract or concrete, factual or virtual, to sit on it. Such is the full quaternion

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structure within the polyvalently possible meanings of which the consciousness of everyone circulates, participating successively within these four aspects in a figure-of-eight alternation. A fourfold polyvalence is implied in this verse, where the three states, open, closed, and the middle, are brought into the picture as covering the essence of creation, sustenance and dissolution, which the cosmic process must necessarily imply in any philosophy. The Absolute is a constant beyond the changing face of its own phenomenal functionings. Meanings could circulate semiotically or syntactically into a deeper "meaning of meanings." The final meaning of all meanings attains the Absolute, as is meant to be implied here in the state of mind and appearance. Overtness and innateness could be compared to space and time, and through the transparency of articulated space and time, which are both amorphous, as Bergson would put it, we could see a meaning of lasting interest to humanity, even long after relativity is forgotten. The withdrawn half-shut eyes of the Goddess reveal the same picture as Bergson's, but in Sankara's language. We can still notice a mythological consideration which is retained in this highly philosophical version of creation in the epithet, "Daughter of the Earth-supporting Lord," which also means to show that the Goddess belongs to the ontological side of the total structural situation.

The expression "without anything left over" shows that, as counterparts, the perceptual and actual contents have an interchangeability. In the context of the Absolute, nothing can be left over as a remainder. The pluralistic world of relativism, when it includes everything (without remainder) under its scope attains an equality of status with the unique Absolute of the numerator side. Cancellation is possible only between ensembles of the same status. Only two totalities can be cancelled out. The theory of ensembles in modern mathematics makes this requirements binding.

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tavāparṇe karṇejapa nayana paiśūnya cakitā
nilīyante toye niyatam animeṣāś śapharikāḥ
iyam ca śrīr baddhachadapuṭa kavāṭam kuvalayam
jahāti pratyūṣe niśi ca vighaṭayya praviśati.

Oh Aparṇa (Pārvati), afraid of the gossip carried to the base
of your ear by your lengthened eyes,
Surely the female *śapharika* fish lies submerged unwinking
within water;
This Lakṣmi, too, at dawn leaves behind the closed petals of
blue water lilies, like doors,
And at dusk, forcing them open, she re-enters therein.

There are two complementary structural and dynamic images put into this verse. The first picture refers to a horizontal dynamism, while the second refers to a figure-of-eight dynamism in which the verticalized version is presented in stronger relief. Both belong to the same background of Absolute Beauty. Breaking surface sheen of certain placid and gently flowing rivers, one sometimes sees the species of silvery fish that jump into the air and add a lively gleam to the situation. Here we have a case of participation between numerator and denominator across the bounds of a horizontal axis of reference. Kāḷidāsa, in *Śākuntaḷam* speaks of the Kaṇva Ashram to indicate the same line of demarcation between the plus and minus sides of a horizontal partition, within the core of the total structure of absolute Beauty or Reality.

The second picture in this verse depicts Lakṣmi finding herself shut out of her chamber at dawn; she is thus obliged to re-enter by forcing the petal doors of the blue water lily, which opens only at dusk—responding to moonlight, rather than sunlight like the other varieties of lotus. A bee caught within a lotus at dusk can come out only in the morning. Here the converse is true of Lakṣmi, who is shut out of her apartment to wander and

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probably to spend the whole of her daytime in the company of merchants and moneymakers in the marketplace.

So there are two contrasts to be kept in mind in this verse. One is the contemptible frivolity of the *śapharikā* fish, frolicking below the horizontal water level or sometimes above it. Then there is Lakṣmi, the Goddess of wealth, who is not sufficiently dignified to make her equal to the absolute Pārvati. Pārvati is here called *aparṇa* (leafless), suggestive of an austere attitude of mind analogous to a leafless tree, as in the case of some women who observe fasting at certain periods because of their very austere contemplative state of mind. The two contrasting figure-of-eight movements, involving two kinds of participation within a fourfold frame of reference within the purview of absolute Beauty, are to be inserted together and dynamically visualized in living terms with all the modalities or phases natural to them both. This structural dynamism has been treated in plainer terms by Narayana Guru in his *Ātmopadeśa-Śatakam* (Verses 33, 54, 56, 68 and 83). There is a common Cartesian correlation to be used here to make these two picturs fit into the same pattern.

The implication is, especially to be noted, that the *śapharikā* fish behave with great restraint because they are being watched closely by the all-seeing eyes of the Absolute Godddess, who, beeing steeped in austere contemplation of Siva, cannot tolerate frivolity by the younger handmaidens in her retinue. The transmission of gossip takes place through concepts rather than percepts, and what escapes the direct regard of the Goddess is supplemented by hearsay factors that reach the higher intelligible levels implied in the austere meditation normal to the Goddess. In the last line, Lakṣmi, who is excluded from her own lotus apartment at dawn, is required to use force. A spirit like Lakṣmi, cannot enter the negative side if she does not do it sufficiently early. She takes some trouble to open it, not really forcing. Why it doesn't open by itself and how much force she has to use are left open to question. She has to take some kind of action. There are certain vigils in which spirits wander freely, but they have to return before the cock, as was the case with Hamlet's ghost.

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There are two operations facing opposite ways—like inverted brackets—in this verse, which is perhaps all that we have to understand by Lakṣmi's act of forcibly re-entering her blue lotus apartment at dusk. Between the two kinds of lotuses, the common *kamala* that opens in daylight, responding to the sun, and the blue *kuvalaya* or *kumuda* of this verse which opens at night, responding to the moon, there is a certain alternating symmetry or reciprocity, as between the overt and the innate aspects of the beauty value. The gleaming silvery fish participate across the horizontal axis, just as the personification of the value of wealth does at a more negative level. Both of these pictures conform to the same structural dynamism.

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dṛśā drāghīyasyā daradalita nīlotpala rucā
davīyāmsam dīnam snapaya kṛpayā mām api śive
anenāyam dhanyo bhavati na ca te hānir iyatā
vane vā harmye vā samakara nipāto himakaraḥ.

With your long extended regard, reaching those who are
far off, having the beauty of water lilies just opening,
Oh Consort of Siva, bathe me with mercy, too, who am
steeped in misery;
Thus shall I be blessed, without any loss to You;
The moonbeams fall on forest and mansion with equality.

The section referring to the grace of beauty lingering round the region of the eyes of the Goddess seems to be terminating at this verse, perhaps extending to Verse 58, where the ears will get primacy over the eyes. Here we find a tacit reference to the devotee who places himself far off and peripherally, because his supplication does not prompt him to obtrude into the presence of the Goddess except from a great distance. He effaces his own ego completely by this attitude, and is satisfied with retaining the thinnest streak of participation to ensure the bipolarity between himself and the principle of absolute Beauty. We can easily guess that, as in the case of the first and last verses of this work as well as Verses 75 and 98, no person other than the author of these verses himself could fit into the context portrayed here. He wishes to efface his own personality to the utmost possible extent, while still keeping what is required as a minimum in the contemplative devotional context. Such a neutral, soft, pure devotion that does not obtrude anywhere is of a superior quality.

The reference to water lilies indicates that a neutral zero point is applicable to the supplicant, who wishes to keep his neutrality intact. The long extended regard or glance which reaches those far off can only refer to beams secondarily given out by the beauty of the blue water lily. The pride natural to such an

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intelligent philosopher is neutralized in this way. One has to be an Aryan to worship Sarasvati as a numerator Vedic value. This is for orthodox Brahmins. The true Advaitin is neither orthodox nor heterodox, and the humble night water lily suits his purpose even better than the other, prouder, variety of day water lily called the white lotus. The difference between a Mūkāmbika and a Sarasvati, is to be remembered here. Misery might be objected to as being a non-Aryan sentiment, as expressed in the Bhagavad Gita (II: 2) by the words *anārya jyuṣṭam asvargyam*, which means "undignified for an Aryan and not conducive to heaven." Preference for heaven and for a nonsentimental divinity belongs to the plus side, but Sankara, who refers to himself as a "Dravidian child" in Verse 75, is satisfied in taking a humbler position, where the ego of an Aryan is not allowed to obtrude to spoil the cause of true contemplation. The given empirical world is a transitory abode of suffering *(duḥkhālayam)*, as the Bhagavad Gita (VIII: 15) puts it. This might be labelled as Oriental pessimism, but sin plays the same role in the Occidental prophetic religions. The fear of Allah is another substitute for the same negative factor in life, without which no question of prayer could arise at all. The whole of this composition is meant to be a prayer and, from the side of the supplicant, would necessarily imply something to be prayed for, of recognizing his need for salvation or happiness. All aspiration presupposes some kind of privation or other. There is a touch of agony always implied in contemplation. Contemplation as an ascent presupposes such a factor.

All that the supplicant here asks for is the faintest form of recognition, as one affiliated to the context of universal motherhood. This could be the humble position of a child, or a student, or a worshiper in a temple or as in this verse, even of a tree in the forest outside a mansion, on which the moonbeams might fall without any personal preference involved in such a blessing. This kind of spontaneous unpremeditated grace is all that the supplicant expects, without the least touch of egoism, as is clearly indicated in this verse. When bathed in the mercy of the Goddess, the personality of the supplicant is overcome by a sense of blessedness, by itself and for itself. No quantitative loss or gain could be involved in such a pure form of benediction.

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The arithmetical context of getting and spending is to be completely ruled out here as impersonal devotion attains to its maximum purity. Unlike the equality between citizen and citizen, the vertical relation between ruler and ruled is more like the nature of the benediction conferred on the supplicant in the prayer contained in this verse.

The just-opening water lilies show that they are beginning at dusk to respond to moonlight. This picture is not supposed to be a paradise in heaven, but a corresponding paradise available to all mortals at a point where the earth and heaven meet, at a neutral zero-point. The half-open blue water lilies suggest such a neutral beauty, neither too glamorous nor too humble.

We find in the second line a specific reference in the first person. This cannot be treated as incidental. Sankara is obviously putting himself in the place of the typical supplicant.

The reference to the forest and palace and moonlight lifts the context of worship out of religious holiness altogether. This is in keeping with the attitude cultivated even from the first verse and sustained to the very end. This series of verses is not a text that has to do with holiness or any conventional religiously hidebound belief.

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arāḷam te pāḷīyugaḷam agarājanya tanaye
na keṣām ādhatte kusumaśara kodaṇḍa kutukam
tiraścīno yatra śravaṇa patham ullaṅghya vilasan-
āpaṅga vyāsaṅgo diśati śarasandhāna dhiṣaṇām.

The two sets of curved limiting lines of yours, oh Daughter of the King of Mountains—
Who is it that will not fancy them as the bow of the Flower-arrowed One,
Placed obliquely, reaching beyond the path of hearing
As it shines and adhering to your side glances, which give the impression of the fixing of the arrow?

As the poet watches the face of the Goddess, he fixes his attention successively on certain regions placed in a descending series of vertical points. As he lingers at one point he tries to describe the enigmatic beauty that plays there. He imagines certain highly suggestive double images where one image is superimposed by mental construction upon the other, which is more ontologically based. Such two-sided images vie with each other in a paradoxical play. At the heart of the Absolute there is an ambiguity, a paradox, an enigma, a two-sided indeterminism, which is not meant by the author to be abolished. This is but in keeping with *anirvacanīya khyāti* (the doctrine of impredicability), which is the final philosophical position that Advaita Vedanta wants to take. Jainism has also got its *syādvāda* based on "maybe/maybe not" at one and the same time. Impredicability is not looked upon as a weakness in Vedanta, but rather as a strength. As in the case of Heisenberg's indeterminate science, it does not mean that ambiguity of this kind is to be avoided or overcome by a better philosophy. There are various *khyātis* (doctrines) referred to as characteristic of different kinds of idealistic philosophies on the Indian soil. This kind of *khyāthivāda* (discussion of doctrines) attempts to locate error by

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fixing the paradox on different grounds or realities. *Ātmakhyāti* attempts to fix error onto the ground of the Self. *Anyathākhyāti* is the position which says that "something else" is the cause of error. *Ākhyāti* is still another variety, in which error has no real ground at all. Abolishing paradoxes has been the challenge successively taken up by philosophers in India and variously settled by foisting error on the basic ground. The position of Vedanta is like that of the Jainas, but goes one step further by locating the principle of ambiguity or error, or the possibility thereof, at the core of the Absolute itself. The Jainas and the Buddhist do not postulate any such Absolute. Vedanta postulates an *eka puruṣa*, the one supreme spirit or *brahman*, within whose personality, by a method of double negation and double assertion, ambiguity abolishes itself in terms of a unitive value revealed in a fourth-dimensional context by cancellation. These are the doctrinal aspects of Vedanta, and if we should not take care to keep them in mind, an irreducible perplexity would still remain as a residue when we try to fix the meaning of each of the verses that follow, especially here in the middle of the work. Once we know that the author only wants to heighten the paradox and leave it there, instead of abolishing it—and in so doing wants to underline the principle of indeterminism or uncertanity or impredicability as a vestige that can be abolished, at best, in the form of an element of wonder at the core of the Absolute itself—then we shall be able to see his purpose here. It is not, however, an indeterminism without a proper method and theory of knowledge that we should expect to find.

In this verse the subject is again the arrows of the God of Love, aimed at his archenemy, Siva, who is seated at the omega point. The beauty of the Goddess is the excuse for Kāma even to be able to operate, and offords him a neutral ground on which he can still try his pranks. The Goddess wants to attract, while the God refuses to be attracted except when the right conditions are perfectly fulfilled. So an invisible war—sometimes cold, sometimes hot—is taking place here between the the beauty on the upper part of the face of the Goddess, with its appeal directed vertically, and Siva, who represents the positive side of the same principle. The interplay is not a brute form of fighting, but is meant to be reduced into thin schematic terms,

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both visible and invisible at the same time. At one moment we must exercise our intelligence to catch the conflict. At another moment we have to change our perspective to the perceptual side in order to see the progress of the rival forces. Finally, a slight bias on the ontological rather than the teleological side succeeds, and the battle is declared on by the wonder of the beauty on the face of the Goddess. Then the descending retrogression continues downward into still lower focal points or loci, always in a vertical succession. As soon as a locus has been fixed in a certain verse, it is required that we put a limiting set of circles around that locus called the *bindu sthāna*, as in the case of the *Śrī cakra*.

Such circles may not be explicitly mentioned, but some kind of limiting lines are required, within which the ambiguous play of beauty could live and move. In this particular verse, such limits are the two sets of curved lines marked by the two ears and the two eyebrows. The secret fixing of the arrow of Kāma behind the visible scene has been alluded to in different stages from Verse 6 through Verse 47. The enigmatic beauty of the Goddess cannot be brought into relief without a conflict, however subtle, presupposed between Kāma and Siva. Thus Kāma has to figure in many places. The Goddess is not just beautiful, but enigmatically so; and this makes all the difference. Beauty without a tragic touch becomes insipid.

Physiologically viewed, there might not really be a circle enclosed by these two sets of curved lines, but in a psychophysically revised version, we could think of the two functions of seeing and hearing as being contained within the limits of the eyebrows and the ears. The arrows fixed by Kāma could have two rival positions at right angles to each other. Kāma, as a rival to Siva, can be expected to let his arrows fly in an oblique direction. It is only occasionally, when every other condition is favorable, that his arrows can be made to fly vertically. This he cannot do without complying with the side glance of the Goddess and conforming to the same highly verticalized attitude. These differences have been alluded to already, especially in Verse 52. In the present verse the object is merely to represent the functioning of Kāma, whose arrows fly horizontally, beyond the limits of the ears and what is spatialized motion could be

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treated as changed qualitatively into time-like motion. Here the arrows, when they fly, have to adhere to the direction of side glances. Kāma is not yet letting the arrows fly, he is only represented here as fixing them onto the obliquely aimed bow as he gets ready to give battle in his normal way. While still in the act of fixing the base of the arrow onto the bowstring, it is permissible for us to think of the two sets of curved lines as marking the limits within which Kāma could operate, at any of the four right angle positions possible to him. As his target is on the plus side of the situation, a ninety degree tilting of the bow is all that we might have to imagine here. If the arrow belongs to a three-dimensional context, the shining lines of the glances of the Goddess could be said to belong to a four-dimensional context, where visibility and audibility cancel each other out. Only the wonder of absolute Beauty remains for us to see when paradox has thus been abolished.

The fixing of an arrow is the only definite event in this verse. The rest consists of glances and sound elements which make up a kind of *cakra*, composed of lines representing light or sound radiating from and circulating round the central locus. Beauty is to be meditated upon; and when absolute Beauty is the theme, it can produce such contemplative visions based equally on fact and fable.

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spurad gaṇḍābhoga prātiphalita tāṭaṅga yugaḷam
catuś cakram manye tava mukham idam manmatha ratham
yam āruhya druhyaty avani ratham arkendu caraṇam
mahāvīro māraḥ pramatha pataye sajjitavate.

This, your face I consider Kāma's chariot with four wheels,
As seen when your ear ornaments are reflected on your shining cheeks,
Surmounting which, that great hero, Kāma, assails the Lord of Hosts,
Who, with sun and moon for wheels, mounting the globe for chariot, is fully ready to give him battle.

In this verse we have to distinguish a situation in which the battle is about to start between Kāma and Siva, who is here named the Lord of Hosts. It is the beautiful face of the Goddess which is the psychophysical basis for the chariot of Kāma, who was fixing his arrows in the previous verse. Now, on closer scrutiny, the chariot, which is more ontological in status, comes into view. Two of the wheels of the chariot are the large wheel-like ear ornaments worn by women of ancient India, which were common even thirty years ago. These supply the physical basis for the illusion of the chariot, while the two other wheels are created by their reflections, one degree removed from the physical reality and therefore nearer to the metaphysical. The beauty of the Goddess is neither physical nor metaphysical, but both. In the same way that an actual chair and a conceptual chair could belong together in consciousness in an integrated view of reality, so these two pairs of wheels complement each other and do not enter into conflict. The reflected wheels, however, have only a horizontal status of parity with the two original ones. They are like mirror reflections and therefore virtual. The reflecting surface is the glossiness of the cheeks of the Goddess. A thin line has to separate the two sets of wheels because the transition from perceptual to conceptnal

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requires a limiting parameter, as in a mirage which reflects sunlight. A layer of hot air can cause a mirage effect when viewed at a certain angle. The glossy cheeks of the Goddess are therefore aptly referred to as producing this illusion of a chariot with four wheels. Such a chariot has already been introduced into the picture more than once. In Verse 6 it was said to consist of the monsoon breeze favorable to the flowery season. Now Kāma takes his position on the completed chariot to let his arrows fly, not only horizontally. The chance of hitting Siva himself and making him fall in love with the beauty of the face of Pārvati is a possibility not to be ruled out in this subtle picture of occasionalism.

Having completed the picture of the chariot of Kāma, the poet passes on to the chariot proper to Siva. Siva does not require four wheels, because the two celestial orbs, the sun and the moon, could be so manipulated by him that they would perhaps alternately take over the function of the two back wheels. As for the front wheel with the help of which he is supposed to descend along the vertical line, that has to be of an order less hypostatic than the former two. Thus the chariot could be thought of as functioning with a spherical wheel, which could be none other than the globe of the earth itself. The wheels are anyhow, imaginary and have a highly hypostatic status, so one should not ask why the analogy does not square with cosmological facts. Cosmology and cosmogony have to differ, and contemplative cosmogony must differ still further. When we make these concessions, we can see that Siva himself is preparing to fight against Kāma. That Kāma is a significantly dignified rival for Siva has already been established in Verse 6. Kāma cannot always be victorious, but he has to bide his chance as occasionalism dictates. The Beauty being an absolutist value, here the side glances of the Goddess can make the arrow of Kāma fly more effectively, even in the vertical direction, by which Siva could successfully be hit. That is the reason why Siva is getting ready to meet the threat. A cancellation will take place in which the Beauhy of the Goddess will triumph. The spiritual progress of the votary of the Goddess thus becomes assured. We have to note that it is readiness for battle, and not actual battle, that is

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to be imagined here. This moment is in the eternal present, in which the paradox of the Absolute is cancelling itself out.

We have referred to the glossy skin of the cheeks of the Goddess as reflecting the light of the ear ornaments. Many twilights of moonsets and moonrises or sunsets and sunrises could be fused together to influence the outer skin—even of fruits, such as mangoes or peaches. Oranges are said to be "sun-kissed." The glossy surface of fruits implies a thin film which separates the beauty that is inside from the beauty that is outside, as between the taste of the orange and the glossiness of its skin. Many twilight dreams of innumerable sunset and sunrise hours must have produced the dappled coloration seen on certain fruits, and even perhaps the brindled patches on certain cows. The varieties of colored light can produce all kinds of patterns of beauty in nature, and the beauty of the Goddess here is not outside the scope of such an explanation.

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sarasvatyās sūktīr amṛta laharī kauśalaharīḥ
pibantyāś śarvāṇī śravaṇacuḷukābhyām aviraḷam
camatkāra śḷāghā calita śirasaḥ kuṇḍalagaṇo
chaṇatkārais tārair prativacanam ācaṣṭa iva te.

The good sayings of Sarasvati, exuding nectar sweetness—
With great interest, oh Blessed One, your ears ever absorb
Each bright wit therein, while approving with nods,
Your earrings seem to applaud them with series of high-pitched jinglings.

In the previous section the arrows of Kāma and the side glances of the Goddess figured in collaboration to present before us to fully developed *cakras*, one the higher and the other lower. The lower *cakra* implied the three modalities of Nature *(guṇas)* and other aesthetic interests which were sublimated or verticalized in the earlier half of the previous set of ten verses. That section has terminated. In this verse we pass on to the domain proper to the Goddess of the Word, Sarasvati, who presides over poetry. In the Vedic context she is represented as sitting in white robes on a white lotus, telling crystal beads and holding a book. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* which presents a later Vedic revision of Sarasvati, speaks of a goddess who sends arrows both ways, that is, toward both the perceptual and conceptual sides at once. Such a Word-Goddess, who presides over both the dictionaries—the conceptual as well as the perceptual—is sometimes referred to as *Ubhaya Bhārati* (a double Sarasvati), and is proper to the temple which is said to have been established by Sankara himself at the Sringeri Math.

For the purposes of this verse we need more than one goddess. So Sankara gives us the picture of one goddess responding to the words of the other. It is important for us to fix the epistemological status of these two goddesses before trying to understand the dialogue taking place between them. One is represented

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here as only nodding while the other is actually speaking. The difference between these two versions of the Word-Goddess is the same as what Marshall Mc Luhan might distinguish as "the medium and the message." If we take a pencil with red colored lead and make a line on a paper with it, that could be called a "medium" language, based on percepts. The red is immediately evident in the medium itself, and the conceptual "message" or word is not necessary to make the meaning any clearer. Sarasvati on the other hand, represents the word "red," when we spell it out with any pencil, not necessarily one with red colored lead. The interaction between perceptual realities and conceptual realities is thus a form of agreement or one-to-one correspondence between numerator and denominator aspects of the same word content. We could have the example of "stop" and a red light put together in a traffic signal, where symbol and sign meet to cancel out into the same meaning.

The situation in this verse is analogous. The Absolute Goddess has two aspects that belong together to the same meaning. Structurally analyzed, we get an ontologically biased Goddess having a communication with her own teleological counterpart. The lower Goddess, who is more real, bears real metallic earrings jingling on her ears. She does not speak, but her response is made up of nods which only approve of the verbose statements made by her own higher dialectical counterpart. As Goddesses of the Word, both of them are interested in the aptness of analogies that poets might succeed in choosing. When aptness succeeds, it is the success of the perceptual aspects of analogy cancelling out against its conceptual aspects. The verdict on this matter has to come from the side of perception, because human experience begins with sensations and perceptions, and only then passes over to higher conceptual constructions.

The sayings of Sarasvati consist of wise proverbs or witticisms. Witty statements have to be short and convincing. When analogies are aptly employed, those who enjoy good literature will surely applaud the genius of the poet concerned. Without being expressed in words, the applause could come from the ontological side, because seeing is always more convincing than hearing. This is why the jingling of the ear ornaments, along with the gesture of nodding, is meant here by the poet to

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express in nonverbose language the appreciation by the Goddess on hearing wise proverbs expressed in the more verbose language or literature, belonging to the side of Sarasvati. Nodding is the vertical link connecting the two sides, and the jingling of the ear ornaments participates both in the world of sound as well as in the world of the "medium." Thus message and medium meet and cancel out, resulting in a situation that is meant to enhance the beauty value of the Word Goddess who could be seen as speaking or silent, as required.

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asau nāsāvaṁśas tuhina giri vaṁśa dhvaja paṭī
tvadīyo nedīyaḥ phalatu phalam asmākam ucitam
vahaty antar muktāś śiśirakara niśśvāsa galitam
samṛddhyā yat tāsām bahir api ca muktāmaṇi dharaḥ.

On Banner of the Dynasty of the Himālayas, your nose
ridge—the flagstaff of your clan —
Let it ripen for us standing so near you deserving fruit;
Inwardly wearing pearls as it does, and dropped by cool
moonbeam respiration,
it bears —even outside— pearls, due to the plenitude
of the same.

The center of interest now passes from the brightness of the face as a whole, to the noseridge, which represents a vertical descending line. In Verse 47 the left fist and forearm of the God of Love were hiding the downward movement of the bowstring as it was being pulled along the vertical line across the face, corresponding to the ridge of the nose. The target in that position must be one that aims the arrows upward at Siva. If the hands of the God of Love belong to a three-dimensional grade of appearance, here the line of the noseridge could be said to mark the vertical amplitude within which subtle values reside.

A pearl is always used as an analogy for something precious, as when we say "a pearl of great price." In Indian philosophy also, the pearl has figured as an analogy very dear to contemplative speculators for the value of Truth. Though the ocean may contain gems which are equally precious, on a more hypostatic level values are more aptly comparable to bright pearls. Iridescent hues that play on its surface give the pearl a silvery gleam, and Vedanta has used this peculiar quality as an analogy to explain the false glamor of vain appearances. The hard nacreous layer of the inner shell, called the "mother-of-pearl," is where the

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pearls are formed, but from a chemical standpoint this layer is nothing other than calcium carbonate.

The Vedanta of Sankara, in its methodology, gives primacy to ontology as against higher theoretical values. Here, however, in the context of the beauty of the face of the Goddess, the pearl is compared to a prayer which in turn is comparable to a wish-fulfilling tree called *Devadāru*, placed very high in the hypostatic scale of values. The corresponding wish-fulfilling factor belonging to the lower limit of existences is often referred to as *Kāmadhenu* (the cow of plenty). In the face of the Goddess we are still on the side of the numerator values of life, so it is not unjustified here for the poet to use the image of a heavenly tree, at the bottom of which some supplicants can be imagined to be standing, praying for some kind of benefits to be dropped down to them by way of answer to their various prayers. God grants prayers, because there would have been no God in any of the world's literature if the opposite had been true in the experience of mankind.

In fact, any prayer unanswered could be answered by ourselves, because theology admits that the Kingdom of God is within oneself. In Vedanta, this dictum is quite acceptable, because the axiomatic overall dictum of all *mahāvākyas* (great sayings) categorically asserts that "thou art That." One receives what one deserves: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." God, in his justice and generosity, cannot violate such overall laws, within the framework of which he himself is placed. No god can exist otherwise than by granting prayers because prayers alone can apply to possible boons or benefits. The axiomatic laws of reciprocity, compensation and cancellability in the overall structural context of the Absolute, make such a law binding equally for man and God at once, though only in a subtle absolutist fourth-dimensional sense. It is to this order of values that the beauty of the Goddess belongs, where pearls are items of beauty representing benefits like fruits that could drop down from a heavenly tree for hungry children to pick up and eat. The production of fruit in such superabundance by a tree could not be explained if such a theory were to be discarded as completely fanciful.

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The opening epithet, "Banner of the Dynasty of the Himalayas", means that since the Himalayas are already the highest of mountains, to erect a flagstaff to make them rise even higher indicates that such attributes as family honor or reputation can be produced, as much as one chooses, along a vertical positive parameter. *Noblesse oblige* (the nobleman obliges) is the rule: the more noble you are, the more your generosity is heightened. In the previous verse, we were still in the realm of values that belonged to the world of good literature , but here honor is a value that can reach even higher and subtler limits. The flagstaff analogy is thus very apt. In India we are justified in thinking of a bamboo flagstaff, because this verse implies that it must be hollow in order to allow the passage of moon-beams, as well as air, through it. The nose exists for breathing through, up or down. Here, waiting immediately below such a vertical nose, are those who are praying for benefits like fruits to fall down to the horizontal *terra firma*. The gods confer blessings from above while the denizens of the earth wait to receive them. Such is the overall situation from which we have to extract the beauty value of the center of the face of the Goddess. The glory of the flagstaff could refer to the father of Parvati at its base, while the flag at the top could be a symbol that glorifies Siva. Between these two limits, there is an ascent and a descent taking place in terms of cool and pearly moonbeam respiration, in the context of sheer beauty. Such an abstracted respiration is like the alternation between space-like and time-like factors within the Absolute, where space can devour time, and time space, in the eternal cosmic process of alternating phases, just as in human respiration.

Life matures with each act of breathing and fulfills itself in the form of that generosity which is basic to its overall nature. It is not just generosity, but over-generosity, like that of a gambler who gives even his shirt when only the coat is asked for. Absolute Generosity cannot be compatible with the calculative precaution of a hesitant man. Fruit trees in springtime overladen with flowers reflect unquestionably the generosity of nature. In tropical regions of palm trees and coral reefs, the many small coconuts that drop to the ground during the ripening process surely reveal such a superabundance, within the context of which nature normally

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operates. In India, mango trees are sometimes so overladen with fruit that their branches are bent down to the ground. Such a picture has touched the heart of mystics like Narayana Guru, because there is beauty in such superabundant Generosity. Because generosity is normally a subjective feeling, the analogy of pearls ripening inside the hollow of the flagstaff and dropping down to the supplicant subjectively, as if through a tube, would be justified. But absolute Generosity in a fully Advaitic sense, knows no limit of inside or outside. It must be with the view of abolishing this distinction between inside and outside, which gets dissolved or abolished by itself as generosity attains to its more absolutist quality, that Sankara resorts to such a farfetched analogy of pearls covering the outside and filling the inside of the nostrils of the Goddess. Pearl nosescrews worn by Indian women show a cluster of pearls, which look as if they are overflowing from inside the nostrils. Poetry might have guided the jeweler's art here, or vice versa. For us, it is important to derive the lesson that Generosity and Beauty are inseparable.

MINOR CONSIDERATIONS

The opening line refers to the clan of the Goddess. A young woman is proud of her father's clan, but after marriage her loyalties are transferred to her husband. The transition between the two loyalties, one turned retrospectively and the other turned prospectively, is a delicate one, and is sometimes seen to be very touchy in the case of sensitive women who feel easily insulted if a slight slur is cast upon their ancestry. Later in Verse 86, we will see that this kind of touchiness is possible even in the relation between Siva and Pārvati. This is a good advice for husbands; don't discredit the father-in-law.

The second line underlines the fact that devotees are placed very near to the foot of the flagstaff, and that they can get only those benefits which they deserve. Cause and effect are related vertically in a law of reciprocal specificity. Clay is the material cause of the pot and the medium through which cause and effect are linked either way. One cannot make curd without milk, and no wave is possible without water. No illusion is possible without some basis for the illusion. Vedanta respects such a law of reciprocity as categorical or imperative. One cannot pray

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for something that one does not implicitly or explicitly deserve. A woman can only pray for a husband, not for a wife. We can see that any young woman's prayer for a husband is generally answered sooner or later, the differences being only incidental, making allowances for the accidental joltings in life. It is by the timely answer of prayers that humanity continues to live normally, generation after generation.

In the third line, the cool moonbeams are suggested as favorable to the dropping of ripe fruits from the trees. Wintering is as important for fruits as the heat of the sun for the putting forth of tender leaves and for giving an impetus to flowering. We see in the mango tree, for instance, that strong sunlight is required to usher in the best season for the fruits. Apples, on the other hand, require heavy winter conditions for the fruits to mature. The dropping of the fruits occurs only after they have first matured by sunlight. In this sense, it is not against nature to think that the cool breezes help to make the fruits drop down. The idea that moonbeams mixed with cool air pass through the cavity of a flagstaff to grant benefits to supplicants might seem farfetched, but such a style is normal to the whole of this work, where creative imagination and poetic fancy are given the fullest freedom.

Finally, in the last line, where pearls cluster outside as well as inside the nostrils of the Goddess, the function of the poet surpasses itself. The only excuse for doing so is that Sankara thereby justifies his own Advaitic position in treating absolute Beauty as an ultimate value. Internally and externally, as between the selfsame class or as between two classes *(vijātīya* and *sajātīyā)*, Advaita tolerates no duality or difference. In these verses, which are often mistakenly considered to be merely part of Tantrism, such poetic excesses can be justified, according to us, only in the name of that uncompromising unitive stand so characteristic of Sankara's philosophy as a whole.

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prakṛtyā raktāyās tava sudati dantacchada ruceḥ
pravakṣye sādṛśyam janayatu phalam vidruma latā
na bimbam tad bimba pratiphalana rāgād aruṇitam
tulām addhyāroḍhum katham iva vilajjeta kalayā.

Oh one of Goodly Teeth, of your parted lips, naturally red,
I shall declare the similitude:
Let the coral reef bear fruit—not the *bimba* fruit, whose
redness is a reflection from its original model (your lips),
And which desires to climb to a state of mid-parity;
However could they avoid being abashed at least by a shade?

In Verse 62 the *bindu sthāna*, or central locus, is to be placed between the parted lips, where the beautiful teeth of the Goddess are revealed. The play of participation between the pearly teeth and the coral-red lips is the central theme of this verse. Sanskrit poets are fond of one analogy in particular for the luscious, rich and fully red lips of a voluptuous maiden, which is the *bimba* fruit (the bright red fruit of the plant *Momordica Monadelpha)*, so a beautiful girl is often called "one of *bimba*-fruit-lips."

Here the poet steps down from the platform, as it were, to speak intimately with his audience by means of the analogies that are most fitting to the beauty of the lips and teeth, which blend their colors both ways to create a non-dual form of absolute Beauty by mutual participation. The teeth are hard like coral, while the lips are naturally soft and supple like a *bimba* fruit. The problem is to establish a parity or one to one correspondence between them to fulfill the requirements of a central Advaitic value which should always be the same, at whatever level, inside or outside. The beauty of the Goddess is going to be appreciated by the poet himself here. By stepping down from the platform to talk to the reader, he throws off his formal status, and seems to say that between the reader and the poet an intimate understanding could be established on a certain basis. Both of them are equally interested in finding the nearest analogy to the beauty that emerges at that particular locus where

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the teeth reveal the bright color of the parted lips. The object of the poet here is to show that the magenta color of coral and also that of *bimba* fruit seem to rival each other in establishing superiority over some other analogy that another poet might suggest.

Thus, the situation is one that involves a subtle intrigue between rival poetic tastes. The solidity of the teeth would make it reasonable for a poet to think that the analogy of hard coral applies more aptly to the teeth than to the *bimba* fruit, which would naturally belong by common sense standards to the side of the lips. It is clearly stated in the first line that the poet is trying to find the right analogy for the teeth and the lips, and because the teeth are hard and solid, he suggests that if the coral reef could have a fruit, that would establish a parity between the teeth and the lips to reveal the non-dual Beauty that suggests itself in that region. The coral reef does not have fruit, but we could suppose a soft fruit in order to suggest that the redness of the fruit permeates into the region of the teeth and thus makes them look like fruit by borrowed light, one degree removed from the suggested analogy. The attributes of solid coral and the attributes that belong to a luscious fruit are meant here to be cancelled out into a state of parity or equality. The teeth, in trying to establish an equality, in respect of a brilliant reddishness, do not fully succeed in doing so. It is even suggested that they shyly hesitate in the attempt. This hesitation implies that at one moment they are equal in beauty with the lips, and at another moment they are not, in the opinion of the teeth themselves.

An element of ambiguity is thus purposely retained by Sankara here in order to underline the doctrinal principle of indeterminism or non-predicability that applies when two conjugates are involved as rival factors to the same absolute Value. The analogy of energy and velocity of particles in quantum mechanics is supposed to represent such a principle of indeterminism. They cannot both be fixed at the same time and place, to give a value that is fully determined. Vedanta accepts this indeterminism as basic to Nature itself, when viewed from the side of physics rather than that of metaphysics. Either physics is right or metaphysics is right at a given time. For both to be right at the same time, the Absolute must step in as a

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normative and a re-normative reference. The shyness and hesitation in the matter of establishing an equality of beauty between the solid teeth, which resemble coral ontologically but which wish to attain an equality of beauty with the luscious fruit-like lips—which are more qualitative or teleological in their status—presents an enigma which refuses to be abolished. The vestige of paradox exists at the core even of the notion of the Absolute, however much we might try to fix its meaning finally. Such a paradoxical element is considered permissible as a last residue, in the Bhagavad Gita. The Absolute is a mystery and a wonder, and it is a rare value within the mind of yogis capable of meditating on it. An alternating figure-of-eight movement belongs to the Absolute Value content till meditation abolishes even the least duality between the Self and the non-Self aspects of the same content. But the mystery is never to be abolished. Within the core of such a mystery, the stable term is to be marked, if at all, by that finalized experience in which the meditator becomes not other than the object meditated upon, by cancellation. The term of all meditation is thus attained as a supreme yogic experience. Even mind and matter can be said to meet here, as well as ends and means.

It is to bring out this subtle Vedantic position that Sankara leaves the contested equality of beauty between lips and teeth, one shining by the borrowed light of the other, in the form of a rhetorical question in terms of a shyness, where ontology and teleology may be said to be playing a game of hide-and-seek through all time. Such a situation is called *anyonya adhyāsa* (mutual conditioning). The favorite example of *adhyāsa* (conditioning) is that of a clear colorless crystal placed on a piece of red satin. Without becoming red, the crystal is made to look red through and through. The teeth and the luscious fruit complement each other, as do quality and quantity, and the indeterminism that would persist in the form of a hesitation or shyness is itself a value to be equated with the absolute Value and not to be abolished. The two limbs of an equation need not be abolished for a trained mathematician to understand its import. The duality between the limbs of the equation is no drawback to the equation itself.

The final meaning is the message to be sought in the experience of the yogi. It is a form of unitive understanding

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and nothing more. Pluralism can coexist with the notion of unity, so that the philosopher could cancel them both out into the non-dual Absolute. All propositions must contain terms which it is the task of the logician to resolve into its own middle term. Such a middle term is the Absolute. To recognize ambiguity between terms so as to abolish them correctly is preferable to just saying, as theologians often do, that one should not believe in many gods. Dialectical methodology would admit both the references of thesis and antithesis for arriving at a final synthesis. Even Hegelianism admits of such a method, of which Engels is a continuator.

If time and space are conjugates, we can see through their amorphous articulation a being which, like a flame or a dancing Nataraja, gives us a figure-of-eight functional picture. This idea is similar to the shyness of the teeth to resemble the lips. One attains the Absolute thus through abstracting rival aspects of beauty. Truth is both a way as well as a fact. Ends and means unite in it into an experience. We must be careful not to bind down with hide the ambiguity of this dancing flame. A "Lord, Lordism" will result from fixing it down as a doctrine. As the Bhagavad Gita says, "It is a wonder and a mystery." That is as far as one can understand it. We must leave it as a value of this kind and not solidify it into a doctrine.

The Guru comes in naturally because people attached to wisdom have an automatic affiliation. Guru and Śiṣya are like the two limbs of an equation. They are equal, in principle, like comrades.

This language of such a high degree of fancifulness is natural to man, and perfectly acceptable to children. If the financial world can speak of the "dancing pound" or say that the "dollar is shy", why cannot Sankara use such terms in an absolutist context?

The ontological teeth, as effect, lag slightly behind the teleological lips, as cause, in the figure-of-eight participation. This is poetry bent to speak for the philosophy of Vedanta, which Westerners would claim to be unfair. There is a subtle trick played here by Sankara. The interplay here is between quantitative and qualitative aspects of beauty, and the event could be described as intersubjective as well as transphysical.

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smitas jyotsnājālam tava vadana candrasya pibatām
cakorāṇām āsīd atirasatayā cañcu jaḍimā
atas te śītāmśor amṛta laharīm āmlarucayaḥ
pibanti svacchandam niśi niśi bhṛśam kāñcika dhiyā.

In drinking your smile—like a moonbeam-cluster out of your moon-bright face—
Cakoras, from a surfeit of sweetness,
Got numbness of tongue; thus presently they eagerly imbibe
The nectar thereof, treating it as sour brew night by night.

In Verse 63 we find a further accentuation of the ambiguous ambivalence implied in the shyness of the previous verse. There is a certain variety of partridge common in India known as the *cakora*, which keeps sleepers awake throughout bright moonlit nights by its repeated noises from trees around homes. Such a partridge is inserted into the context of beauty appreciation in this verse. There are certain aspects of beauty that can produce surfeit, and there are others that are enjoyable in a different even negative, sense. Connoisseurs of wines are aware of this difference, as between sweet and dry wines. Benedictine and Vermouth could be cited as examples. Moonbeams as a numerator value have to be compensated by the taste of the same moonbeams as understood from the inside of a partridge suffering from surfeit. At the beginning of night, the partridge indulge in the positive aspect of sweetness, and when they are fed up with such a sweetness, their power of enjoyment becomes numbed. Their taste is reversed, and they begin to prefer the negative aspect of the same taste.

If the Absolute is enjoyable, it is not in a dull mechanistic sense that we have to understand the enjoyment. The ambivalent aspects of enjoyment have to enter into an alternating interplay, even in the joy of the contemplation of beauty content. It is in this sense that tragedies can be entertaining, and we pay for

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cinema shows that make us shed tears throughout. Adversities have their sweet use. Beauty could be one-sided and insipid in the same way. Kāḷidāsa dwells on this in almost every description of his heroines, as when he says that the beauty of the lotus is enhanced when it is set among mosses. Sweet and savory items have to alternate at good parties for the same reason referred to in this verse; otherwise tongues would become numb.

The main point is contained in the last line, which says that it is the *cakora's* attitude of mind that removes the numbness or partly contributes to it, whatever the numerator value in itself might contain by way of sweetness or sourness. It is an alternation established between the sweet and sour tastes playing between overt and innate factors in a figure-of-eight movement which alone can secure a happiness that can endure through day or night, or early and later moonlight tastes, both of which tend to alternate trans-subjectively and inter physically.

We note from the first line that we are still at the locus of the teeth of the Goddess, when they are revealed to view by her sweet smile. If the moon has a sweet brightness, the teeth add to the sweetness as an attribute to the totality of the face. The moon's orb can be sweet, but the smile makes it more specifically or qualitatively sweet. To both these sweetnesses, which coexist on the positive side of the total situation which we could call absolute Beauty, we have to insert a negative aspect of the same beauty in subjective terms before we could integrate the value of beauty as a totality in which opposites coexist. This requirement is accomplished in the last half of the verse. When put together by abstraction and generalization, absolute Beauty can emerge into view and enter into our own consciousness at one and the same time. Relative or partial beauty thus becomes raised to the status of absolute Beauty by the cancellation of its own positive and negative sides. Surfeit is supposed to be reached at a certain time of night, whether subjective or objective, where moonlight could be partial or complete. Compensation works both ways: the mind supplies what is not there, and what is there compensates for what the mind hankers after. Thus we get the same constant of absolute Beauty, though placed within the context of a night rather than of a daytime. The structural and alternating aspects remain the same whatever the conjugates

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involved, but the conjugates must belong to the same class, context or order, within a phenomenologically understood *epoche* or situation.

The first line suggests a multiplicity of moons within a general moonlight, each bright tooth representing a unit of beauty set within the totality of the beauty of the moon itself. Substance and attribute can belong together, as also unity and multiplicity. One implies many and many can imply one. Parmenides and Zeno know of this kind of dialectics, by which duality is finally abolished through a correct methodology and not just doctrinally, as, for example, in monotheism. The eagerness of the last line is meant to balance the surfeit of the second line; they cancel out into a middle state when the equation is understood.

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aviśrāntam patyur guṇagaṇakathāmreḍana japā
japāpuṣpac chāyā tava janani jihvā jayati sā
yad agrāsīnāyāḥ sphaṭikadṛṣad acchacchavimayī
sarasvatyā mūrtiḥ pariṇamati māṇikya vapuṣā.

By offering incessant repetition of muttered charms
glorifying your Lord,
The flower-red shade of your tongue triumphs;
The pure, clear, crystal outline image of Sarasvati,
Seated at your tongue tip, oh Mother, in turn attains to
rubyhood in its bodily form.

Prayers could be said in words or through the throwing of colored flowers, which is the way in India, the favorite color being red or magenta. Such is the underlying idea with which we have to understand the meaning of this verse. Whether said in words or in flowers, it is the same absolute devotion that is implied. To put it in another way, we could say that the word language participates with the flower language and vice versa. Words are more on the side of the intelligibles, while colored flowers represent the perceptibles or the medium aspect of language. There is a thin line of demarcation separating these two aspects of medium and message, which it is the purpose of the present verse to treat unitively. It is the tip of the tongue that repeats muttered *mantras* or charms. In South Indian temples there is the practice of throwing flowers at idols, after dipping them in holy water. Such an action, which is visible, is accompanied by a corresponding muttered charm in the form of a predicative description of the god to be propitiated. Baskets, or sometimes forests, of flowers are offered as "stainless shrines" and as Sir Edwin Arnold eulogizes for Buddhism, countless millions of lips repeat the formula, "I take my refuge in Buddha." Such a flower language is proper to the context of idol worship as practiced, especially in South India, to this day. The devotee

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forgets himself and is never satisfied with the number of times that he repeats such a gesture and its corresponding mutterings.

In this verse the Goddess is worshiping her own husband after the same model. The duality between muttered inward charm and outward offered flowers is to be effectively abolished here. The poet finds a rather ingenious way of making the two events, verbal and non-verbal, belong together either as cause or effect to one and the same context. The world of words properly belongs to the Goddess Sarasvati, to whom all color is to be considered extraneous, because concepts, as such, are colorless, while percepts could belong to the colorful side of the same situation. If we should think of a small crystal clear image of Sarasvati as representing the side of concepts, we could well imagine the tongue tip, where the *mantra* is articulated an endless number of times, as the ground on which the message could touch the medium. Thus we can see the relevancy of the analogy in this verse which puts the red tip of the tongue of the Goddess at the *bindusthāna*, or locus, around which absolute Beauty is to be visualized.

This series of verses favors the negative or perceptual perspective of the Absolute as against the merely conceptual one. It is for this reason that this verse proclaims that the red shade is the locus of absolute Beauty. On the tip of such a magenta-red tongue, one has to imagine that somebody has placed a crystal clear image of the Goddess of the Word, Sarasvati. This image is also to be visualized in all its beauty as a universally concrete clear concept. The form of a concept and the name of a concept cannot be separated from one another. Every name must suggest some form or another, at least as a weakness of the constitution of our own minds. One has to overcome the duality of both visual and conceptual conditioning habits of the mind to be able to transcend both, and to think without name or form at all. The Bhagavad Gita says that such a task of focusing attention on the formless and the nameless is difficult to accomplish. We are embodied human beings, it says, and therefore anthropomorphism comes as a corollary to our thought forms, especially about God. This is the reason why God is referred to by the third person masculine pronoun "He" in most scriptures, and is left unquestioned as a concession to a natural way of thinking,

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though strictly speaking it is questionable. Anthropomorphism is thus a necessary evil, and therefore can be overlooked. The idolatrous imagery employed here is excusable only on the basis of a similar reasoning. Sarasvati, the Goddess of the Word, has a traditional form known to the conventional Hindu mind. Unless we have some specific reasons to reject it, there can be no objection to the use of such an iconographic representation.

When all these considerations are conceded, it will be seen that this verse does not offer any major difficult, even for the modern reader. The underlying Advaitic doctrine is all that Sankara is interested in revealing, in a protolinguistic form. This is another example of *anyonya adhysāa* (mutual participation or conditioning). It is on the side of giving primacy to ontology that, if at all, this approach may be said to err. We have to remark here again that it is from a negative perspective that we are examining the content of the Absolute throughout this work, as we have been cautioned even from Verse 4, where the feet have been given primacy over the hands.

Why the Goddess should indulge in incessant repetition of the name of her Lord, when she herself is of a divine status, might be a relevant question. The answer is that methodological consistency requires that the counterparts have the same homogeneous richness so that they could cancel out against each other. Incessant repetition is needed to give to concepts the same ontological richness that is conferred by nature from the perceptual side. Rubyhood and crystal clarity condition each other at the tip of the tongue, where medium and message meet unitively.

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raṇe jitvā daityān apahṛta śirastraḥ kavacibhir-
nivṛttaiś caṇḍāmśa tripurahara nirmālya vimukhaiḥ
viśākhendro'pendraiś śaśiviśada karpūra śakalāḥ
vilīyante mātas tava vadana tāmbūla kabalāḥ.

Oh Mother, those mouthfuls of betel come from your face
As Viśākha, Indra and Upendra, returning from vanquishing
the demons in battle,
Taking off their headgear and still in their armor; they
discountenance
The portions of Siva's offering meant for Caṇḍa, which are
moon-bright bits of camphor.

Verse 65 seems at first to be a complex jumble of mixed metaphors and mythological imagery superimposed on one another. No wonder, therefore, that most commentaries have gone off the mark in offering even an approximately acceptable meaning for it. We have to place it in its proper context and perspective first, and we should not make the mistake of thinking that what belongs to the canvas belongs also to the painting. There are four epistemological and methodological layers, each implying its own degree of abstraction and generalization. These four possible ways of abstraction were known to Vedantic speculation many centuries before modern physics began to use this same kind of four–dimensional reference.

A mythological reference to three gods who are engaged in some kind of battle is the first film to be separated out from the other deeper layers. Then comes a deeper layer in which the gods *(devas)* and the demons *(asuras)* are arranged on two opposite sides, each representing their own system of life values. This axiological view has a still deeper layer hiding behind it, in which we have to find the reason why Subrahmaṇya (Viśākha) and the other two gods reject some of the holy tokens of offering while accepting others. Still deeper, in fourth-dimensional abstraction, we have to imagine that the whole of this story has

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its central locus in the mouth of the Goddess, who is engaged in chewing betel nuts. Camphor is also an ingredient of the mixture that the Goddess is chewing up, and the red juice is swallowed into her own inside each time the mouthful is fully turned to magenta.

We have also to remember that it is in the mind of the contemplative, as he meditates on the betel-chewing mouth, that more peripheral wheels or *cakras* of thought present themselves before his mind's eye, all having the same epicenter or locus, which is the mouth of the Goddess. In its chapter on the vision of the universal principle of Time, the Bhagavad Gita presents a similar picture, where the heads of warriors and kings are being mercilessly crushed like nuts between the teeth of the God (XI: 26-27). The idea here is not unlike that vision. It is a war that is being waged between the forces of good and evil, although the Absolute itself is not to be divided into two groups. The evil forces and the good forces have a conflict implied between them to be understood at least schematically, in which a line, however thin, demarcating the two sides is inevitably to be presupposed, at least for the sake of argument. This line is no other than that between the two rows of teeth of the Goddess, where nuts representing the skulls of heroes of one side or the other are being crushed, so that Time could proceed like a car of *Jagannāth* in the famous Puri festival, on its destructive onward progression. Time's arrow cannot be reversed except in terms of very pure memory. The forward-flowing breeze of Time could play sometimes on silken sails, but must inevitably imply harsh facts belonging to the stern stuff of duty or historical necessity. The magenta color, moreover, is highly suggestive of flesh and blood; and if we should add the skulls and armor, it is left to our option to imagine more grades of concreteness or abstraction than the four that we have already mentioned.

The three gods, who appear after giving battle to the evil forces, have removed their headgear out of respect for the presence of the absolute Goddess. They remove only half the accouterments that make for a warlike situation. The three gods are willing to respect the presence of the Goddess, but they are not willing to negate the function for which they were born. This applies especially to the case of Subrahmaṇya (Viśākha),

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whose function, by the very circumstances of his birth, consists of teaching a lesson to the denominator factors of Evil. He represents the highest possible values within the setup of divinities of the Hindu pantheon, Vedic or non-Vedic. Subrahmaṇya is here represented as highly conscious of the function or duty that properly belongs to him. A policeman's duty is to arrest the thieves and not to pardon them.

In the previous verses we have been thinking of the mouth region of the Goddess in various degrees of verticalized value gradations. Here we come to a grade in which retrospective memories as well as prospective imagination enter into the picture with equal force, from both the poles of the total situation. As the contemplative meditates on this picture of the betel-chewing Goddess associations crowd into his mind, each set having its own epistemological self-consistency. We can even imagine three concentric circles, as in the *śrī cakra*, separating the inner zones from the outer ones. Magenta color of different saturations, brilliance and shade can distinguish the zones, but historical or mythological events are all to be grounded in the self-same *cakra*, which the contemplative constructs, in order to appreciate intelligently the absolute non-dual Beauty of the Goddess.

We could imagine a heroic or epic *(Purāṇic)* scene here being acted out within the mouth of the Goddess which could also be seen as a temple or cave in which somebody is offering worship to the absolute Goddess. As it is impolite to wear headgear in pride when approaching a sacred place dedicated to God, the three divinities here are represented as conforming to the requirements of good behavior by taking off their hats. They retain the rest of their armor, however, with the excuse that they are still in the overall context of battle. Within the temple scene, we could imagine a priest who brings to these three divine supplicants that which they are meant to accept as a token of respect for the supreme principle as they understand it, each from his own standpoint, implying its own frame of value-reference. The absolute Goddess does not take sides, but her son (Subrahmaṇya) cannot deny his own duty, being born historically or mythologically to teach a lesson to the evil forces. The *Kumārasambhava* makes this role very clear, although Subrahmaṇya is not lacking in his knowledge of Vedantic

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absolutism. He is even said to have taught the meaning of *AUM* to his own father, Siva.

Camphor is an ingredient, especially the soft variety, used to flavor betel nuts. Camphor is also an integral item among the holy ingredients making up a temple offering to be brought out by the priests after waving of lights before an idol. Camphor is unique in that it is both a solid and (potentially) a flame of light, so it is used as an analogy for the process by which material substance turns into the intelligent factor, symbolized by the flame. Moon-bright bits of camphor left on the salver brought by the priest for Subrahmaṇya represent a value meant to give a flavor or perfume to betel chewing. As a solid, it belongs to the side of existence, so in this form, before being lit, it belongs to the denominator context of the *asuras* (demons) and not to the *devas* (gods) of the numerator context. Like the "thinking substance," camphor combines within itself substantiality and thought.

Since Subrahmaṇya represents the numerator side, he does not approve of the offered camphor because it is incompatible with his main function of teaching a lesson to the opposite side. He does not wish to pretend to be an absolutist prematurely and inconsistently with his own personality, just as Arjuna is not to leave the battlefield by pretending or claiming prematurely to be a sannyasin. Duty in this sense is sometimes called "the stern daughter of the voice of God," though this dictum need not be binding on any one who can claim correctly and completely to be an absolutist. Subrahmaṇya was born as an answer to the prayer of the gods to protect them from the excesses of the demons at that time. His function comes under the category of historical necessity, not in terms of ordinary history, but at least in the order of cosmic evolution, as depicted in the great epics in Indian literature, which are called *Itihāsas*, of which the model in the West could be the *Odyssey* of Homer.

Caṇḍa is another name for a divinity represented by the moon. Siva himself, representing the numerator aspect of the Absolute, carries moonlight on his head. The camphor bits could, by the same token, be considered as representing the Moon principle on the denominator side. *Caṇḍa* (God of the Moon) and *Candra* (Moon) thus become interchangeable as cause or effect aspects

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of light. As for the three gods portrayed here, which are slightly different from the usual Vedic trinity, the name Upendra can simply denote Viṣṇu or it can also mean "second in command to Indra." Viśākha could represent Siva, because he is born from Siva's middle eye. Viṣṇu represents lasting enjoyable values. Aryan and Dravidian divinities are thus seen here to be put together in a revised form, without violating their triple principal functions of creation, preservation and destruction.

In the first line the act of swallowing flavored red betel juice is represented, with camphor added as a subtly pervasive ingredient. The mouthfuls, when they merge, could be imagined as permeating upward into the world of prospective or creative imagination, or as emerging retrospectively into the totality of memories of past years already contained as a vertical dimension within the presence that the beauty of the Goddess represents. The gods are returning from some past event already accomplished and are seen now to be standing at a neutral point in the present. They could be said to be returning from deeper negative levels of the vertical axis. They do not remove all their warlike accouterments because they are still within the context of a war situation. Subrahmaṇya could remove his armor only when he goes to his abode nearer to the positive limit of the vertical axis.

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vipañcyā gāyantī vividham apadānam paśupates-
tvayā'rabdhe vaktum calita śirasā sādhu vacane
tadiyair mādhuryair apalapita tantrī kalaravām
nijām vīṇām vāṇī niculayati colena nibhṛtam.

Starting as You do to sing, with your vīṇa and with head movements,
Of the varied exploits of the City Burner, as the Goddess of the Word,
The one of lovely speech—You promptly cover up and silence
Your instrument, which mocks the sweetness thereof by sounds of strings.

In Verse 66 we are still in a general setting in which the greatness of Siva is being extolled by Pārvati. She is starting to sing to the accompaniment of her favorite instrument, the vīṇa, which is seen to be inseparably associated with her wherever she is represented in the traditional style. She and her instrument are to be treated as belonging together to one and the same context. Although she starts to sing accompanied by the vīṇa, she decides soon after starting that its accompaniment does not come up to expectation. This is seen to be an afterthought. Two movements are specifically referred to in this situation, in which there is a vocal as well as an instrumental music starting together. Not long after beginning thus, in fact almost abruptly, the Goddess stops playing her instrument, putting it out of commission. This movement has to be treated together with the other movement of nodding her own head in approval of the music. The voice of the Goddess is here praised as being of a very superior quality.

We are asked to extract whatever meaning we possibly can, given this data, but what we extract must also necessarily enhance the absolute Beauty value of the Goddess. This is an overall requirement from every verse. It is easy to see that no Tantric viewpoint or doctrine is meant to be brought into light

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by the total situation depicted here. *Tantra śāstra* is not, as we know it, especially interested in music, nor is it a teaching in which a vīṇa is to be silenced in favor of glorifying vocal music, as evidently intended here. The above limitations make it almost inevitable for us to rely on some doctrine of Advaita Vedanta to be the main theme which the Goddess's abrupt change of mind is intended to reveal. We therefore surmise that this situation is meant to bring out a double sided method peculiar to Vedanta when it wishes to abolish, dissolve, or transcend the duality implied in any paradox. Paradox first recognizes two truths. Vedanta abolishes paradox finally, not by recognizing the contradiction, but by absorbing the contradiction into a unitive vision by a higher intuitive way of thinking. We shall not be reading too much into the context here if we say that it is a schematic structural pattern that is to be presupposed as guiding the poetic imagination of Sankara, while, as always, his intention is to underline an Advaitic doctrine conforming to the methodology proper to Vedanta.

Instrumental music from a vīṇa placed horizontally across the figure of the Goddess represents the arithmetic or mechanistic aspect of inert life, while she herself represents the vertical axis. Her nods of approval of her own vocal music represent something like saying "yes, yes" or a double assertion. Translated into philosophical terms, this wound amount to saying, "What exists thus really exists and can never be abolished." The horizontal mechanistic world is to be recognized as real enough initially, but when philosophical thought gains ground, it would abolish itself and get absorbed into the vertical axis. The relation between the two parameters or correlates is the same as what Descartes would say exists between *res cogitans* and *res extenso*. The latter is space-like and the former time-like, understood in terms of pure duration.

It is permitted to think, in terms of Cartesian or Bergsonian philosophy, that one attains the Absolute. Sankara's doctrine is not basically different. That which does not exist is abolished by double negation. By double assertion, the picture of the Absolute emerges in terms of a highly significant value, which is the Beauty of the Goddess. The more she appreciates the beauty of her own voice, the more it becomes evident to her that the

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instrument, with its poor twanging imitations by sounds of metallic wires, cannot add anything to the richness that her own voice can give to music in a fully real sense. Although the instrument is dear to her, she does not hesitate a moment to cover it with a shawl, perhaps one of a dark color, which is a form of double negation applied to the arithmetical side of the total situation representing the Absolute as a value. Paradox thus stands abolished, dissolved or transcended. Each approving nod of the head of the Goddess describes an implied figure of eight which we can see through the transparency of the total formless space-time situation, reflecting the structure that properly belongs to the content of the Absolute. The change of mind only introduces that dynamic touch to this otherwise static picture, which Bergson would perhaps distinguish by his term *schema moteur*, as against the schema of conceptualists or rationalists like Kant or Descartes. The quickness with which the Goddess covers her vīṇa reflects the dynamism which is *not* meant to be of a gradual or hesitant order. Higher intuition comes, not by installments, but by split second understanding.

The overall situation can be summed up in the following words: The Goddess of the Word, finding that her speech is superior to its own mechanistic imitation, changes her mind quickly to silence the instrument because the imitation cannot add anything (that is not already there) to the original. Speech is better than just sound, which is included in it already.

We could note also that Kāḷidāsa, in the *Meghadūta*, has a picture of the wife of a Yaksha (divine being) who is separated from her husband and trying to play the vīṇa to pass her unhappy hours in a cavern in the Himalayas, where she is destined to live in loneliness. There the version is similar but slightly different. She is unable to play the vīṇa because of her tears, which come from the richer content of her memories stimulated by vocally articulated words of music. Here it is a more neutral way of abolishing paradox. In both cases, it is the glory of the husband that is the subject matter of the music. The pangs of seperation are not found in the Goddess here, unless slightly reflected in the quickness of the gesture of silencing her instrument. The vīṇa could be thought of as being a dear and inseparable companion, having the effect of consoling her loneliness, like a baby in the arms of a mother.

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67

karāgreṇa spṛṣṭam tuhinagiriṇā valsalatayā
girīśenodastam muhur adhara pānākulatayā
kara grāhyam śambhor mukhamukura vṛntam girisute
katham kāram brūmas tava cubukam aupamya rahitam.

Affectionately touched by the tip of the hand of the Mountain King,
And lifted up again and again by Siva out of desire
To drink of your lips, how could we ever speak of
That which makes the handle for your face-mirror—your peerless chin?

In Verse 67 the beauty of the chin of the Goddess is the central locus. This region of the face is a point of common appeal both to the father of Pārvati as well as to her beloved husband. Her father is referred to here as touching the chin with tender parental affection. The husband, although he is interested in the more erotic act of kissing the Goddess on her lips to enjoy the bliss it can give him, is here referred to as treating the face of the Goddess as a mirror, for which her chin is something like a handle. He lifts this handle so that it could take a verticalized position as he approaches the face, which is only a reflection of his own face in essence. As he looks into it to enjoy the counterpart, as it were, of his own beauty, the reflected version is essentially the same absolute Beauty. The duality of husband and wife is thus seen to be abolished, and herein lies the Advaitic doctrine hidden from superficial view. The lifting of the "handle of the mirror" gives it a status of equality or parity of subject and object. Only one of these two versions could be real, in keeping with the Advaitic doctrine. The reflection is just an appearance derived from the Real. The resultant Beauty, however, is not vitiated by any unilateral consideration of reality, but is the "Real of reals" as a value, and thus it becomes unique, as stated here in the last words.

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The first half of this verse contrasts the way in which the father and the husband touch the chin of their beloved. We notice that what is lost in actuality is gained in virtuality. The father only touches the daughter with the tip of his fingers. While the actual contact is minimum, there is only figurative contact of the same chin by the husband. What is underlined here is Siva's intention to drink of the lips. There is no actual contact implied, and even if it had been depicted, it would have been only a contact with the mirror surface intervening between them. Thus the union of Siva and Pārvati is fully real but not physical in the factual everyday sense. Dialectical counterparts can operate only on a ground which knows no duality, as between subject and object.

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bhujāśleṣān nityam pura damayituḥ kaṇṭakavatī
tava grīvā dhatte mukha kamala nāla śriyam iyam
svataḥ śvetā kālāgaru bahula jambāla malinā
mṛṇālī lālityam vahati yad adho hāra latikā.

Incessantly embraced by the arms of the City Burner,
With hair thrilled to thorny bristling, Your neck
Shows the grace of a stalk for Your lotus face, by itself white,
but smudged by excess of dark cosmetic paste,
Retaining a pearly necklace beneath with the suppleness of a
lotus creeper tendril.

The erotic advances made by Siva toward Pārvati are of a subtle and ineffable order. We have seen even from the second verse that the realism, if any, in these verses has to be understood as belonging to the world of fine particles. Siva is represented in one of the plays of Kāḷidāsa *(Māḷavikāgnimitra)*, in the very opening verse, as having his body intimately mixed up with that of his wife, Pārvati, but in spite of such a communion still remaining the best of ascetics. It is reasonable to expect that Sankara respects the same Advaitic, Sanskritic tradition. Therefore, it is important for us to extract the meaning of this verse in such a way as not to do violence to any of the tacit conventions respected by Sankara. It is on a very thin schematic as well as conceptual ground, where name and form are just able to participate with each other in clear terms of light, shade and line, with corresponding conceptions which in turn have to belong to a world of discourse rather than of brute fact, that we have to establish the meaning here. Such a neutral ground would fit in with the verses that follow as well as establish a continuity with the previous verses.

In Verse 67 we saw that the father and the husband treat the chin of the Goddess with a certain aloofness because of the chin being neither matter nor mind, but something participating both

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ways. To Siva it was figurative, while to the father it was existent, though his participation was of a light order. All these details are important for us to remember so that the Advaitic doctrine that is hidden under this living pictorial language could be correctly appreciated.

The incessant embrace described in this verse, which produces horripilation or "thorny bristling" of the hair of the neck of the Goddess, is to be understood in terms of a thrilling sense of inner bliss, more akin to salvation than to ordinary erotic play. The best eroticism is one in which this kind of two-sided participation is perfectly balanced between subject and object, matter and mind. Unilateral stress on one or the other can only spoil the case of both. We have to place ourselves, therefore, sympathetically on a sort of middle ground and understand that the bristling of the hair only represents the exalted nature of the thrill that the Goddess is able to enjoy. On the side of Siva, it is to be noted that he is not thinking in terms of an ordinary sex act which might last only a short time, but that he is engaged in everlasting embrace. This is a revised form of erotic relationship in keeping with mystical eroticism rather than merely sexual eroticism. Kāḷidāsa's *Kumārasambhava* also describes Siva, in the last canto, as everlastingly remaining in the bedroom of Pārvati. Any value could be treated *sub specie aeternitatis* in this manner.

The lotus plant is dear to Sanskrit poets and even to wise philosophers who want to use it as an analogy to reveal all laudable spiritual attributes, especially as seen from an ontological perspective. The color of the lotus plant, with its tenderness, its purity, its beauty and especially its inner thread-like core *(mṛṇāḷa tantu)* made of vascular bundles forming gleaming supple strands within the stalk—not to speak of its fragrance and the patches of brown and pink when the petals are half open—are the many items offered by the lotus which the Sanskrit poet loves to work upon in his essentially contemplative poetry. In the case of etotic mystical poetry, the wonder of the lotus plant and its virtues are a source never expended and constantly to be drawn upon age after age, not given up even in the present day literature of vernaculars based on Sanskrit. The stalk of the lotus has on it the very bristles that are referred to in this verse.

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They may not be beautiful to an ordinary poet but to a poet like Sankara, to whom good and bad have to reveal the same beauty value, even the thorny hair of the lotus becomes a precious analogy. Eroticism between the God and Goddess refers to the context of an eternal bliss that can induce *samādhi* in a votary who can meditate on the subject correctly.

The reference to beauty smudged by dark cosmetic pastes reveals another secret. This blemish instead of detracting from the beauty only enhances it, according to the Advaitic poet, as we have already explained in a previous verse. Śakuntala is more beautiful wearing her bark garment and living in an ashram than if she had been represented as dressed in rustling silks and living in the king's palace. Contrast is at the core of the Absolute, and only when it is cancelled out effectively could the absolute Beauty value emerge to view. This is the doctrine that should give a key to justify these labored analogies that would otherwise seem to be artificially pressed into the service of this kind of poetry to make it merely mechanistic and metaphysical in an objectionable sense.

The mud, or dross, in which the lotus plant has to live gives it a status that belongs to it by natural necessity. Even frailties, when they are fully human, could not be treated finally as frailties at all. Human nature has room for many natural deficiencies, and the totality of all such cancel out in a tragic hero, such as an Othello, to give an absolutist touch to his character, which remains fully human in spite of defects like passion or jealousy. It is when such passions do not cancel out against the overall nobility of the character that the situation can become an anticlimax.

The Absolute is a "thing-in-itself," but this quality of being "in itself" implies its dialectical counterpart to set it off in proper relief, without which it cannot be appreciated at all. In the name of such an appreciation of Beauty, the contrast insisted upon here is fully justified. Furthermore, we have to note that the poet is intending to descend step by step into beauty items at the core of the personality of the Goddess which are not the same as their counterparts at the peripheral limits. The elephant skin that Siva is supposed to wear, while remaining the pure universal spirit dancing vertically at its core, contains the same

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type of ideogram as here. In this verse the thing-in-itself is compared to a pearly necklace which shows through beneath the covering of excesses of dark cosmetic paste. Peripherally there is what is extraneous to the thing-in-itself, which is not to be omitted in the complete and realistic picture of Beauty in the context of the Absolute. Evil is not to be explained away, but, it is to be transcended after it has been given its proper place in the total scheme. The pearly necklace reveals a fully verticalized beauty factor, whereas the thorny bristles represent the horizontalized version of the same. The variation is between interiority and peripherality, as also verticality and horizontality. Absolute Beauty has to be viewed in fourfold polyvalent relief to have that overwhelming character which is called *laharī* in this work.

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gaḷe rekhās tisro gatigamaka gītaika nipuṇe
vivāhavyānaddha praguṇaguṇa samkhyā pratibhuvaḥ
virājante nānāvidha madhura rāgākara bhuvām
trayāṇām grāmāṇām sthiti niyama sīmāna iva te.

Those three lines on Your neck, oh One Fully Expert in Time, Syncopation and Melody,
Are the counter-grounds of Your marital thread and strands and sub-strands;
They shine as the ground, wherein is born many a melody—
Giving position, regulation and limitation to the three groups of musical keys.

The transition from the delicate lotus-core strands of shining pearl-like vascular bundles to horizontal lines on the neck of the Goddess give us a new perspective in Verse 69. We are still in the context of music and of words. The nodding head movements of appreciation of her own performance in praise of Siva could still be treated as the subject matter of this verse, but we enter here into the domain of musical theory, just as we entered into semantics in Verses 15 through 17. The beauty of music depends upon the *gati*, *gamaka* and *gīta*, which we have translated as "time, syncopation and melody." Indian musical theory might differ from that of the West, and without going into the merits of these items it would be difficult for us to say if these three complete the list. Music has to conform to some rules of the game. Every game has to have two rival sides. Random kicking of a football on a field by boys not divided into two teams cannot interest anybody. Beauty thus has to be an emergent factor when two counterparts enter into intimate interplay.

Here we have to recognize the black ceremonial string that husbands tie around the necks of their wives at their wedding. Three strands of such a string could easily be considered permissible even if not always considered obligatory. Sankara gives

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these three black strands a first-dimensional status in the picture that he is presenting in this verse. Each is here represented as having a corresponding fold of the skin. There are thus three such folds to be recognized on the neck of the Goddess. As she nods to appreciate the beauty of her own song of praise for Siva these folds could be imagined to become accentuated or lightly marked. Each of the black sub-strands which make up the major strands of the marital string comes from the numerator side as a decoration added on to the beauty of the Goddess.

The beating of time refers to the most horizontally factual quality implied in music. It is like a band across a spectrum. The lowest and the most definite of horizontal lines is to be marked first on the neck of the Goddess. Syncopation is a musical device employed by experts in which they can play with the fractional variation in the time beat, to be recovered in the next or successive beats. Time is not so strictly respected in this item of attractiveness, in the context of music. When we come to the content in music, called melody, the horizontal reference to time can be relaxed a further degree. An expert singer can take full liberties here so as to reveal to advantage his creative genius, sometimes throwing to the wind cheap conventions which only amateurs are expected to respect to the letter. The three lines, therefore, show three degrees of necessity or freedom, to the requirements of which the creative artist in music should conform.

There are approximately a hundred different keys in Indian music called *rāgas*. Even among such *rāgas*, there are *melakartās* (chief modes) and *janyas* which are sub-varieties belonging to the main ones. This explains the reference to strands and sub-strands in this verse. Good music results when the limiting considerations are respected or transcended, according to the genius of the particular musician. It is possible, as suggested in the third line, to see in visible form the subtle incipient movements which are at the basis of creative musical expression. They have these bright lines for their common locus. In the last line, the *function*, involving the time factor, the *regulation*, which would refer to the syncopation, and the *limitation* of the notes of the particular melody or *rāga*, proper to each creative type of music, which give to each of the three main types of music whatever specific

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beauty they might possess, are put in a one to one correspondence with each other. Thus a complete theory of absolute Beauty in music is covered by Sankara in this verse. Music thus helps us to distinguish further details within the structure of absolute Beauty which is still within the domain of the Word and its meaning. Here again we have to notice how the visible and the intelligible are put together with a one to one correspondence between them. Medium and message thus meet and cancel out into sheer musical enjoyability.

We have translated *sthiti* as "position," *niyama* as "regulation" and *sīma* as "limitation." There is also reference to the three *grāmās (trayāṇām grāmāṇām)* which we have translated as "the three groups of musical keys," (major, minor and modal). Each of the keys are limited to certain scales which give them their character.

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70

mṛṇālī mṛdvīnām tava bhuja latānām atasṛṇām
caturbhis saundaryam sarasija bhavaḥ stauti vadanaiḥ
nakhebhyas santrasyan prathama mathanād antaka ripoś-
caturṇām śīrṣāṇām samam abhaya hastārpaṇa dhiyā.

Of the beauty of Your fourfold creeper-like arms, tender as a lotus core,
He sings the praise, the Lotus-born God—trembling the while because of Siva's nails,
That once of yore nipped off his (fifth) head—intending now to pray for
Your refuge-granting hand gesture for each of his remaining heads.

In Verse 70 we are still in the context of the Goddess of the Word. Brahmä, the four-headed god of creation, is depicted here as praying for the protective gesture from the four hands of the Goddess. The reason for this prayer is that, according to mythology, he once tried to grow a fifth head facing upward vertically, to attain the glory of hypostatic levels where, as creator of the universe, he was not deemed fit to encroach. His proper place is below the horizontal line, but not knowing that it was Siva to whom any value that was hypostatic and above the horizontal line properly belonged, Brahmä inadvertently made the mistake for which he had to pay the price, by having his fifth head cruelly pinched off by Siva. Mythologies are not to be taken literally but are generally meant to express some basic spiritual verity which cannot otherwise be made clear. Here Brahmä is seen in a more submissive and humiliated attitude, in which he is singing the praise of his own daughter, Sarasvati. Her four hands have a certain tenderness or suppleness, comparable to the pearly bright bundle of vascular strands at the core of the lotus stalk, which is the nearest analogy that is meant to express the neutral, though material, status of a "thinking substance." Because she is the wife of Siva, her beauty can

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have this status. Her four arms can participate both ways because Siva is not a rival to her but her husband. Brahmā, as mere creator, can at best have the status of very fine pollen, as explained in Verse 2. Sarasvati can represent the mixture of ashes and magenta-red *kumkum* powder, not merely pollen, which is only fine creative biological particles.

There are three epistemological gradations strictly dividing each stratum in the total context, which have been clearly demarcated in the second verse and further qualified in some later verses. Brahmā himself is lotus-born and his daughter is born one degree above the lotus' biological reality. The lotus' tendril-like leaves which have fourfold creeper-like arms are meant here to have a status of their own, not merely material, but consisting of a subtler form of "thinking substance." of the four faces of Brahmā, each belongs to one quadrant of a quaternion structure. With all of his four mouths he is engaged in praying for protection from his own daughter who is nearer to the *logos* or the *nous* than he could aspire to be. The four hands have thus a one to one correspondence with the four mouths from which prayers climb upward. This verse is therefore meant to reveal some structural correspondence and necessary stratification between grades of ontological or teleological richness and poverty. What is gained on the side of existence is lost on the side of the absolute Value. When the four hands condescend to offer refuge to the four heads, there would be a cancellation of four against four, resulting in that Absolute intended to be revealed through this structural analysis of the ground of absolute Beauty.

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nakhānām udyotair nava naḷina rāgam vihasatām
karāṇām te kāntim kathaya kathayāmaḥ katham ume
kayācid vā sāmyam bhajatu kalayā hanta! kamalam
yadi krīḍal lakṣmī caraṇatala lākṣa rasacaṇam.

Made brilliant by your fingernails, that mock the color of
Just opening lotus buds, how could we speak of the beauty
of Your hands?
Granted be, oh Umā, that the lotus could have, somehow, one
shade less of parity with it, if at all,
And that, alas, only when touched by the magenta paste of the
sole of Lakṣmi's feet as she plays thereon.

As in Verse 62, a rhetorical question is at the very core of the subject matter of this verse. Uma is being questioned here by the poet who wants to describe the absolute Beauty of the Goddess by praising the brilliance of the pink color of lotus buds touched by sunlight as the flower bud opens in the morning. Uma herself has to tell him, because the final reference for the beauty of Uma is her own self or personality, and not what is described by someone else. Absolute Beauty has to be in itself, for itself, through itself and by itself. It cannot depend upon anything extraneous to itself. Substance and attribute have both to belong together to the same absolute Substance, finally to be understood in terms of the non-dual Self. The fingernails referred to in the first line are part and parcel of the Goddess herself, and hence when compared to the glory of the lotus bud just opening at dawn, the fingernails score advantage over the analogy, which can refer only to the attribute and not to the substantial Self. The poet thus feels perplexed because all predications about the Absolute do not directly apply to the Absolute itself.

Then he tries an alternative method for successfully giving absolutist status to the beauty of the Goddess. Instead of

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thinking of the fingertips or the sunlight, which are teleological in import, he descends to the lower ontological limit, where the feet of the Goddess are to be imagined as dancing on the top of a lotus flower. The Goddess here is not Sarasvati, nor Pārvati, as proper to this series, but Lakṣmi, who is the Goddess of wealth and prosperity in this world. She has thus a hierophantic status rather than a hypostatic one, which belongs more properly to Sarasvati. These structural interrelationship between gods and goddesses will come in for discussion at the end of the work, in Verse 99. In anticipation, we are justified here in saying that Sarasvati and Lakṣmi are to be considered as partners or counterparts within a totality which properly belongs to Pārvati, of the Absolute context, to be recognized here as distinct from more relativistic subordinate functionary divinities or presences. In the second half of the verse it is thus Lakṣmi who represents the ontological counterpart of the Absolute, the soles of whose feet are smeared with some kind of magenta paste, as normal to beautiful women who know the use of such decorations round the city of Ujjain, figuring in the poetry of Kālidāsa and others. This magenta paste is a substance meant to enhance the beauty of the whole personality of Lakṣmi. Because it is applied to her feet, we could consider it an attribute to her personality, which would represent the substance. Substance and attribute have to participate in Advaita Vedanta, and the difference between them is to be abolished in the name of the demand of the final oneness of absolute Truth.

Here it is the beauty of the lotus that is being compared to the beauty of the fingernails of the Goddess. There is also the question of whether the lotus on which Lakṣmi dances, with magenta paste on the soles of her feet, is to be considered as glorious as the magenta of the fingernails in the first line. One would expect that on the ontological side the magenta color conferred by the feet of the Goddess would enhance the beauty of the lotus to such an extent as to make it rival the beauty of the fingernails. But the answer is that this is just a possibility and not a certainty. It is true that ontology scores above teleology in Vedanta, as we have already indicated. This is a doctrine which was underlined by Sankara as early as Verse 4. A slight difference of degree still remains to be bridged between

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the notion of the absolute Beauty and what even an ontological type of participation can confer on the Absolute. In other words, the poet finds it impossible to praise the Beauty, because absolute Beauty is beyond all predicability. It exists in itself, without any outside reference. The Beauty of the Absolute is beyond praise, as often heard in contemplative literature. Words come back from it without touching it, as the Upanishads put it.

We have to note also that this verse supplies a vertical parameter passing through the quaternion situation pictured in the previous verse. It is therefore meant to make the structural-ism complete.

It is also noteworthy here that the apellation "Umā" used here is not an accident. Pārvati was called "Umā" (Sanskrit: "Oh do not!") by her mother by way of admonishing her against performing austerities to attain Siva. She being a direct representative of the Absolute, it was supposed by her mother that she needed nothing outside herself, even in the form of austerities, to complete her status. There are other derivations besides this one, found in Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*, which suggest that Umā should not resemble Lakṣmi, but be herself. There is still another derivation which suggests that she considers even Siva as unnecessary for her happiness, being complete in herself. All these derivations confer upon Umā a self-sufficient and unique status in the overwhelming context of absolute Beauty. It is just this uniqueness that distinguishes mere appreciatien of beauty from the *lahari*, the upsurge (of beauty), meant to be experienced in these verses.

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samam devī skanda dvipavadana pītam stanayugaṁ
tavedam naḥ khedam haratu satatam prasnuta mukham
yad ālokyāśaṅkākulitahṛdayo hāsajanakaḥ
svakumbhau herambaḥ parimṛśati hastena chaṭiti.

Let it banish our misery, oh Goddess— Your twin breasts,
Ever being sucked equally by Skanda and Gaṇeśa
Seeing the milk-spouting fronts of which, Gaṇeśa causes laughter,
As he feels his own front with misgivings in his heart.

Parity and chilarity of the structure of the Absolute are attempted to be put together in this verse, together with a horizontally placed mirror-like reflecting surface separating the counterparts. Ganesa (the elephant-headed god) and Subrahmanya (the god who glorifies Brahminical virtues) enter as equal partners into this composite picture, evidently created by Sankara himself and not found in any other mythological story. We have now to put a circle round the breast region of the Goddess and try to visualize the structural relationships that are meant to give an integrated beauty content to the absolute Goddess.

The two breasts being sucked by the two sons of the Mountain Goddess represent in themselves strikingly ambivalent characteristics between them. The elephant-headed god, Geṇeśa, has a more earthy character than his brother Subrahmaṇya, who is thin and refined and full of heavenly brightness. The difference in their personalities could be traced to the milk that each of them is nourished on, which is from the same mother and cannot be basically different. Peripherally considered, however, the breasts of the Mother could have a slight lack of parity between them, one being derived from the side of sunlight and the other being derived from the side of moonlight. This idea was suggested in Verse 19. There is a degree of virtuality and of actuality even within the overall status of parity between the breasts, when

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viewed horizontally. The Absolute is enclosed within an upper limit and a lower limit, and horizontal parity, when tilted 90 degrees, can be absorbed into the vertical axis. Then instead of parity we have to think of chilarity (handedness). These distinctions are now entering into the discussion of the structure of space in modern science. There is a right-handed spin and a left-handed spin of electrons described in quantum mechanics. Hexagonal crystals of quartz could have their right-handed facets or left-handed facets more developed, presenting a verticalized asymmetry. The complexity of the structure within the Absolute and its dynamism are still the subject of speculation by scientists and philosophers, nor is this question likely to be settled in the near future, unless epistemology and methodology are subjected to drastic revision independently of the one-sided prejudices of either physics or metaphysics. An integrated Science of the Absolute has still to be presented to the world.

After visualizing the two divinities Gaṇeśa and Subrahmaṇya, sucking the twin breasts of the Goddess on a basis of horizontal parity, it is natural for us to view the same picture later in a more vertically revised perspective at a stage when at least one of these divinities has been weaned out of that early state of childhood, or partially so. This gives us the picture of Gaṇeśa alone confronting the two breasts of the Goddess, so generously spouting milk out of their tips. The suggestion here is that while Pārvati and Subrahmaṇya are watching Gaṇeśa still engaged in, or just after, sucking the milk of his mother, Gaṇeśa looks round, and gets the strange illusion that the two small tusks that grow on his snout are some sort of duplicate of the ivory white spouts of milk that he sees coming from the two breasts of the Goddess. This would suggest that there is a reflecting surface between the consciousness of Gaṇeśa and what he is able to visualize in front of him. Gaṇeśa, being a divinity more earthy than Subrahmaṇya, is to be placed below this line of demarcation separating the conceptual from the perceptual.

The situation on the whole occasions humor on the part of everyone except Gaṇeśa himself, who still treats the illusion seriously and wishes to verify the truth experimentally by passing his hands over his face to see if his tusks are real or only a reflection. They could be both; and in this two-sided predica-

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ment of doubt, there is an element of the humorous to be recognized by us. Bergson in his well-known work on laughter *Le Rire*, analyzes the essence of humor on similar lines. When the mechanistic and the vitalistic worlds interfere with each other, humor emerges.

Now a question remains about the aptness of the prayer of the poet here, that the picture as presented above should banish the misery of humanity. This can only be in the sense that a knowledge of the essence of the Absolute, with all its contents, and relations properly understood within its context, would, as the Upanishads promise, make a man identical with Brahman itself, and thus it could confer salvation directly, without any other intervening factor. The word "ever" in the second line confers an eternal or absolute status of the picture and lifts it out of the context of a mere mythological solution. The last line further underlines that the misgivings of Ganeśa take place in his heart, and not really outside. Thus the schematic status of the whole dynamics of the imagery is further assured.

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73

amū te vakṣojāv amṛta rasa māṇikya kutupau
na sandehaspando nagapati patāke manasi naḥ
pibantau tau yasmād avidita vadhūsaṅga rasikau
kumārāv adyāpi dviradavadana kraunca dalanau.

Oh Banner of the King of Peaks, Your breasts, shoulder-born,
Are nectar-bearing ruby pots indeed, without any trace of doubt;
These two, Skanda and Gaṇeśa, both innocent of conjugal joy,
By reason of drinking from them, remain childlike to the present day.

After outlining in Verse 72 the broad structural features connected with the breast region of the Goddess, this verse focuses attention on the same breasts when understood from a revised standpoint. They are here spoken of as ruby pots containing nectar instead of nourishing milk. A ruby is also a precious stone. The world of colors and rubies suggests the peak lower than that of Kailāsa where Siva with his renunciation reigns supreme among ascetics. Asceticism is to be placed at a higher vertical point in the scale of values, because it transcends all other lesser joys or values, in principle inclusive of them all. The world of luxury is marked by a lesser peak than that where Siva resides, in which the Lord of Wealth, Kubera, reigns supreme.

The difference here is the same as that in the Bible between manna and plain bread which is spoken of as "the staff of life." The very first line mentions the banner of the King of Peaks, which combines the nobilities of both her father and her husband in her personality, as already seen in Verse 61. Nourishment by manna and nourishment by bread are both life-giving in their effect—but they are placed at different levels: manna being more hypostatic than plain bread. Jesus spoke in terms of plain bread instead of the manna promised by Moses to the chosen people.

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Advaita respects both these alternatives, and gives each of them a rightful place in a complete scale of values.

Sometimes the breasts are compared to golden pots, as we see elsewhere in Sanskrit literature, as also in Verse 77, where they are not specifically described as golden but as solid and metallic. If we should imagine a series of horizontal lines making up a ladder of values placed in pairs at different levels, we would get a picture of a kind of ladder, like the golden ladder of Jacob mentioned in the Bible, where angels go up and down. Goethe, in his *Faust*, has improved on this two-way staircase arrangement by making the angels pour wine into the vases while ascending and descending on this scale. It was suggested in Verse 7 that the breasts of the Goddess resemble frontal bulges of a calf elephant. In Verse 19 we saw also that it is permitted to think of a pair of breasts below as well as a pair of breasts placed above the face, and to cancel out the two sets thus presented. Wherever the horizontal line crosses the vertical we could imagine value centers, not unlike the breasts that feed babies. The higher we go in the scale of the nourishment derived, the more it resembles that of manna than of mere bread or milk. More earthy values like fertility or fecundity can be imagined to be present in corresponding lower psychophysical synergic centers marking *cakras* or *ādhāras*, according to the degree of abstraction or generalization we might be interested in making. The first line further underlines, by the Sanskrit word *vakṣoja* (the shoulder-born), the hypostatic rather than the hierophantic status of these value nodes, belonging to a series of such.

To explain how Skanda and Gaṇeśa, though nourished on the same divine nourishment, could show between them ambivalent characteristics is another enigma that we have to fit into the dynamism of the scheme presented here. Both of them are free from carnal dispositions which would have made them enter married life quite early. Extroversion and introversion might at first be supposed to be implied in the difference between Gaṇeśa and Subrahmaṇya. If that were so, Gaṇeśa, being an extrovert, could have been married and Subrahmaṇya, being an introverted type, should have been naturally celibate. This, however, is not what is claimed in this verse. We have to

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suppose, therefore, that there is something in the milk itself, of the same mother, which is capable of accentuating opposite characteristics, as evidenced by the very contrasting bodily structures of Skanda and Gaṇeśa.

Freudian psychology, which gives primacy to sex as influencing the libido and its growth, would perhaps insist that we treat Gaṇeśa as representing horizontally accentuated tendencies and Skanda, his younger brother, as representing more fully verticalized tendencies. Both of these structural features were already put together without conflict, as we have seen in Verse 72. Just as the filament of an electric bulb could be visible when the current is weak, but could become effaced when the current is strong, so both these structural features could be thought of as being present alternately or together without contradiction. As always, a four-fold structure is implied, whether visible or invisible.

The ambivalence or polarity between Skanda and Gaṇeśa here could thus in principle be viewed from both perspectives at once, inclusively, or alternatingly as coming under an "either/or" situation. When voltage is increased the polarity is also accentuated. Carnal feelings of sexual attraction can apply only to a state of low voltage. Both these divinities happen to be nourished on a milk derived from a highly hypostatic point on the vertical scale. For Skanda, being already on the numerator side, this high voltage agrees with the type he already represents. In the case of Gaṇeśa the polarizing effect being equally pronounced, by being nourished from the same milk, has another ambivalent effect, as it were, by double negation and not merely by one-sided absence of electricity. A magnetic needle can be deflected both positively and negatively by virtue of the intensity of the electric current. Electromagnetism follows the same laws as those of light waves and can accommodate parity as well as right or left-handedness, as some of the latest scientific experiments on this feature have revealed.

Another way of explaining the difference between Gaṇeśa and Subrahmaṇya here could be sought in terms of enzymes found in different balances in both sexes at the same time. Equations are easily reversible here, and bodily growth can depend upon such wonderful elements in chemistry as are every

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day being discovered. The predominance of one or the other of these enzymes or hormones could explain these ambivalent types, biologically as well as in the context of electromagnetism. Sex determination itself might be said to be decided by such factors.

The last line would therefore suggest three contingencies: 1) low energy, producing horizontal ambivalence between sexes in which carnality could prevail, 2) a middle state in which intermediate energy is to be presupposed, in which carnality could coexist with more sublimated instincts, and 3) a third stage of high cyclotronic energy in which carnality is abolished and a new kind of dichotomy takes the place of merely biological ambivalence. This applies to deeper regions of abstraction or generalization, of the third or fourth dimension. Predominance of the pituitary or the thyroid without adrenalin entering into the bloodstream, could produce such a state of sex innocence.

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vahaty amba stambera madanuja kumbha prakṛtibhis-
samārabdhām muktāmaṇibhir amalām hāralatikām
kucābhogo bimbādhara rucibhir antaḥ śabaḷitām
pratāpa vyāmiśrām puradamayituḥ kīrtim iva te.

Your mid-bust region—wearing a pure and slender streak of a garland made of pearly beads,
Derived and worked out of the frontal knobs of some elephant-demon vanquished by Siva—
Bears the semblance of his very reputation and his exploits, with the redness of lips, added,
And with an inner brightness presenting a variegated picturesque charm.

Instead of descending another step, we find in Verse 74 that the *cakra* refers to even thinner hypostatic factors than the previous verse. There is reference here again to the reputation of Siva. Reputation *(kīrti)* and fearlessness *(abhaya)* figure very high in the enumeration of absolute virtues. When such an enumeration of divine or superior positive qualities or virtues is attempted in the Bhagavad Gita, the series begins with *abhaya* (XVI: 1). *Kirti* is the leading item in another series where a woman's absolutism is enumerated in serial order (X: 34). Both these factors figure here in the first two lines, which refer to the mid-bust region wearing a pearly garland. The garland is not made of simple pearls, but derived from pearls supposed to be contained within the cranium of an elephant-demon which was a victim to the bravery of Siva. The elephant represents space and horizontality in the *lingua mystica* of contemplative Sanskrit. Killing the elephant to wear its skin is a mythological way of saying that horizontal values are effectively abolished at a point approximating to the *sahasrāra cakra* (crown of the head) or the *ājña cakra* (between the eye-brows). Peripherally the elephant is space-like in its evil-portending value status, but within its brow between the frontal knobs pearls are said to be hidden, at least by poetic convention. Similarly, the snake is also sometimes said to carry jewels in its hood. This is to show that hypostatic values could be far removed from actual levels of biological life functions, but still participate with the same vertically bright

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parameter represented here by the pearly garland. This theory is sufficiently justified by the text when closely scrutinized. Meditation in the middle of the eyebrows represents a superior form of yoga known to experts on the subject. It is supposed to give powers of moving in the sky, in terms of which kind of freedom it is called *khecarī mudra* ("moving in the sky, sky-moving"). [See the *Darśana māla* of Narayana Guru on the subject of *khecarī mudra* in the ninth chapter, on Yoga].

In the third line, besides valor and reputation, we find that a touch of the phenomenal or vitalistic functions of the Goddess as Mother of the Universe is made to condition the sheer pearly whiteness of the two other virtues. When blended thus both by positive and by negative qualities, the neutralization of the redness of the lips adds vitalism to the otherwise conceptual status of factors like bravery or reputation. The last line further qualifies the vitalism by bringing in the inner factor, self-luminous fluorescence, which is more than mere conceptual brightness. Thus, the language of color reveals the value gradations within the total amplitude of the vertical parameter marking the mid-bust region of the Goddess.

It is always difficult to relate virtues or qualities with psychophysical levels. Some psychology books have attempted such graded enumerations, which have mostly failed because an overall structural pattern referring to the totality of the psyche has not been seriously attempted. Psychology has been too much compartmentalized into disciplines in which experts alone can operate with intelligence. Freudian psychology introduced many features unknown to brass instrument dominated experimental psychological disciplines, but it is still considered not quite acceptable to academic psychologists even today. The process of revising what Freud ushered into existence in the world of psychology is still taking place, and such a task is far from being completed even now.

The beads derived from the bone of an elephant first gives place to pearly ones, then they receive a touch of redness at a still lower level and finally an inner fluorescence or iridescence is added; the source being in inner space rather than in outer space. Thus, psychological factors are revealed at all levels possible within the psyche.

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tava stanyam manye dharanidhara kanye hṛdayataḥ
payaḥ pārāvāraḥ parivahati sārasvatam iva
dayāvatyā dattam draviḍaśiśur āsvādya tava yat
kavīnām prauḍhānām ajani kamanīyaḥ kavayitā.

Your breast milk I consider, oh Maiden Born to the
Earth-supporting Lord,
To be word wisdom's ocean of nectar flooding from Your heart—
Offered by one who is kind—which, on tasting,
This Dravidian child, amidst superior poets, is born a
composer of charming verses.

Inserted between Verses 74 and 76 we find one that gives a personal reference to the author himself as a Dravidian child, or product of a proto-Aryan culture. This reference to himself constitutes a kind of signature of the author, which we could also notice in three others: 57, 59 and 98.

There is also an implied first-person reference in the first and the last verses, where he disowns his own direct involvement in the content of these verses. The position that this verse occupies between outer and inner aspects of the mind, when correctly balanced and neutrally normalized, justifies the realistic perspective adopted here and this pointed reference to his own cultural affiliation. This reference has got a great value for us as unmistakable internal evidence that the author of this work is Sankara (see 'Generalities').

We have to note that it is an ocean of milk on which the would-be poet here is to be nourished. Such an ocean of milk represents a vital or life-giving value. Intelligence cannot thrive when vitality is at a low ebb. Thus, the gift of poetry is based on inspiration from the numerator side as well as nourishment from the side of nature. The second line refers to the ocean of word wisdom which, being a numerator value, is compared to the more normal level suggested in the first line by the status of

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Pārvati as daughter of the Earth-supporting Lord. It is not nectar but human breast milk with which the would-be poet is to be nourished in a real sense. Word wisdom's ocean is a generalized and abstracted version of commonsense milk, which marks the same difference as between manna and plain bread, as explained under Verse 73.

The Dravidian child belongs to the first-dimensional commonsense order. Vedism and proto-Vedism are meant to complement each other, and the resultant value which is just normalized human mother's milk when realistically viewed, is an ocean of wisdom nectar when viewed from a more hypostatic perspective. The kindness referred to in the third line is from the numerator side. The last line refers to superior poets as well as to one who is merely capable of producing charming verses.

Sankara, as a product of South India, is naturally influenced by Saivite proto-Aryan civilization—to which Tantrism also belongs, together with a fully developed structural language which was known to ancient Saiva cults—where the famous dancing Nataraja of Chidambaram and the Eternal Mother principle, Śakti, are understood as representing the two aspects of the Absolute even by the popular mind. The suggestion which is sometimes made that the reference here is to Sambandar, one of the four Saivite revivalists, who ruled in Madurai after the defeat of the Jainas, (a comparatively recent period), cannot be considered tenable, especially because Sambandar is not known to have composed any poem in Sanskrit. The distinctness of the two personalities is very clear in spite of panditry, which might confuse the two personalities. In our eyes, at least, Sankara was a product of that part of India fed for centuries by the Malaya breez, which figures so prominently in Sanskrit poetry from the time of Kālidāsa, covering the long richly forested strip extending from the limit of the desert of central India, down to the southern limit marked by the cape at Kanya Kumāri. The whole coastal line is dotted with temples to the Devi in this forested region, having an average depth inland toward the east of more than 100 miles. The Narmada and the Tapti rivers, Kāladi, as well as Mnkāmbika must have been the regions frequented by Sankara as a pedestrian pilgrim. The most famous of Sankara's institutions is at Sringeri, also lying within the limits of the same region.

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Although Sankara is referred to as belonging to a Brahmin, especially a Nambudiri Brahmin, family, the well-known fact that his own kinsmen would not co-operate in finding fire for the funeral of his mother lends enough support to the view that, by his mother's side at least, he was not of a Brahminical origin at all. Further, he was also often nicknamed by Brahmin schools a "Buddhist in disguise." This could not have happened if he had belonged already to an orthodox context. The forms of Tantrism which we see here revalued by Sankara prevailed in this particular geographical region. Sankara might have been born to an itinerant scholar traveling from North India as a pilgrim in South India, a genius born, like Leonardo da Vinci, under somewhat questionable circumstances. This theory is here put forward as one at least as believable as some other events attributed to Sankara in the famous work called *Śankara Dig-vijaya*, many details of which recent research by the Madras University has revealed to be untenable in the light of history, because of a discrepancy of hundreds of years between the personalities with whom Sankara is said to have had arguments or polemical doctrinal duals in his wanderings. (See the short work by Sri Narayana Sāstri of Madras University.)

From Ujjain to Kanyā Kumāri a uniform Sanskritic culture, influencing the lives of the people in this particular coastal area, must have been started about 1200 years ago, which tallies with the number of the Malayalam era and with the age of Sankara himself, who was unmistakably born at Kaladi in the erstwhile North Travancore about 800 A. D. Sankara did not write any work in Malayalam, probably because the Malayalam language itself came into being after this date by the interaction between an older Malayalam language, resembling Tamil, and Sanskrit, which percolated downwards by the constant contact with pilgrims as they traveled between Ujjaini, Śringeri, Kalyāṇi, Mūkāmbika and Kanyā Kumāri. This pilgrim line must have been a living nerve connecting nerve-centers of cultural and spiritual importance.

Since our main interest in this work is one of salvaging Sankara's precious contribution to Advaita Vedanta, this question of fixing the authorship is only of secondary importance to us. Continuators of the same Tantric–Vedantic tradition have been

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found on the same soil of Kerala from time to time, of whom the latest examples are Chatambi Swami and Narayana Guru. These modern gurus have a family resemblance to Sankara's type of spirituality. Their natural affinities belong to those days prior to the infiltration of influences extraneous to that of Sankara on the Kerala soil, from the Mohammedan supremacy that followed the fall of the Vijayanagar Empire through the advent of the European invaders, terminating on the date of the Indian Mutiny. Revalued spirituality at the hands of these modern continuators bypasses the intervening period to catch up with the anterior epoch marking the decline of Buddhism and the rise of Advaita Vedanta. The same circumstances also explain why so much suspicion overcovers the clear Advaitic doctrines contained in these verses.

Other mythological explanations of the phrase "Dravidian child" *(drāviḍa śiśu)* arise from: 1) a myth-making instinct where a rational explanation becomes difficult, 2) a failure to appreciate how the first part (Verses 1-41) called *Ānanda Laharī* and the latter part (Verses 42-100) *Saundarya Laharī* belong together to the same subject of Beauty, the only difference being that they refer to inner and outer spaces, respectively, 3) a failure to appreciate the deeper structural implications. Such mythological explanations are many and do not deserve our serious attention here.

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hara krodhajvālā valibhir avalīḍhena vapuṣā
gabhīre te nābhī sarasi kṛtasaṅgo manasijaḥ
samuttasthau tasmād acala tanaye dhūma latikā
janastām jānīte janani tava romāvalir iti.

That Mind-born God once, on his body being engulfed
In the encircling flames of Siva's ire, dived into the deep lake of Your navel,
Oh Mountain Daughter, and, on re-emerging,
A creeper-like streak of smoke is raised which people look upon as Your rows of hair.

From the vitalistic level, which lends a touch of redness to the lowest level marked in Verse 74, we pass on now to the transition from the outer to the inner space within the psycho-physical structure of the body of the Goddess. The variegated fluorescence that produced a picturesque effect, visible from outside but originating from inside, marked in theoretical terms the lowest point of transition where the participation was equally between outer and inner spaces. In the present verse the mode of operation of this participation is being more closely scrutinized. For the purpose of such a scrutiny it is necessary to think of Kāma as a mind-born divinity or demiurge who could pass from inner space to outer space, as between the two compartments of an hour glass. He is able to dive into inner space when his head has caught fire, and he is also capable of coming back into outer space again. Outer space, representing as it does, conceptual numerator factors not necessarily favorable to life, is comparable to fire rather than to water. In the philosophy of Heraclitus, fire occupies a central place among the elementals, while Thales gives importance to water. The Hylozoists or Eleatics give primacy to one elemental principle or another. Here we are concerned with water and fire only, one favorable to life, the other too hot to sustain life. A dividing line passes horizontally

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at the point of the navel of the Goddess, schematically understood. The Mind-born God does not experience discomfort, because eroticism and discomfort cannot go together. Thus, he is said here to move between the plus and minus sides of the vertical parameter, alternately ducking into and re-emerging from the water. When he ducks under the water the smoke will be enclosed within bubbles, if any, in inner space, and when he re-emerges, the smoke could ascend to form a vertical line in the atmosphere, which can be imagined to be motionless and having its own horizontal pressure at the limit of transition between the regions proper to water and fire. The streak of smoke could be like the one that can be seen rising from a burning incense stick in a still room. This streak is compared to the thin streak of hair at the abdominal region of both men and women. Hair growth indicates places where erotic pleasures are likely to be hiding in concentrated form. Secondary sex qualities are indicated by the presence or absence of hair on the surface of the skin. Thus absence of hair would indicate negative eroticism and growth of hair would mean positive eroticism. There can be an intermediate region marked by the streak referred to here. Deeper structuralism thus can be revealed by superficial ectodermal features which are secondarily related to sex.

The encircling flames of the second line give place to a streak marked by the growth of hair, represented by smoke at a deeper level. Two inverse logarithmic spirals could be imagined here in terms of inside and outside of a loop-like structure, according to the principle of the Mobius strip, just at the region where inner space participates with outer space. If Siva's flames are comparable to his city-burning fervor, the Mountain Daughter's body below her navel can, by contrast represent the cool kindness of living waters. The Mind-born God has been compared by other Sanskrit poets to a limbless magenta ball of light, not unlike the variegated picture presented at the end of Verse 74.

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77

yad etat kāḷindī tanutara taraṅgākṛti śive
kṛśe maddhye kiñcijjanani tava yad bhāti sudhiyām
vimardād anyonyam kucakalaśayor antaragatam
tanūbhūtam vyoma praviśad iva nābhim kuhariṇīm.

Oh Auspicious Mother, that something revealed at Your slender waist,
Looking like superfine ripples on the surface of the river Kāḷindi,
Looms in the mind of contemplatives as space reduced to ethereal particles,
Entering into the cavity of Your navel, and produced by friction of Your pot-like breasts.

Verse 77 presents many enigmatic features which cannot be easily explained. The first is that oft-repeated idea found in many Sanskrit prayers to the Goddess that the waist of the Goddess is so thin that it is *miṭhyākalpita* (falsely put there by the mind). The second major enigma is the reference to the pot-like breasts, which must be metallically solid, creating waves or vibrations fine enough to reveal the very inner structure of pure space itself. Thirdly, it is stated that such a vision is given to selected devotees called *sudhīs*, suggesting that they have to be especially clever, wise, or sensible. We have here translated this word as "contemplatives." Even a contemplative has to focus his attention on this region before it can reveal the special kind of wave effect present on the surface of the river Kāḷindi when fine ripples play on its placid water. Perhaps this refers to a special light effect which could be described as a glimmering sheen produced by criss-cross effects of ripples of thinly alternating troughs and crests, forming a special pattern made up of spots of light alternately dim or bright.

We have already had a reference to the breasts as ruby pots, in Verse 73, which makes them out to be solid instead of supple

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as in reality. We have also seen that such qualities as applied to the twin breasts could form a whole series, sometimes rich in terms of luxury, sometimes of a consistency that is metallic and solid. Here the pot-like breasts have to be imagined to be made up of a heavy metal like gold. When two such pots that are floating on water collide with each other vibrations will be produced which will send ripples cutting criss-cross against the natural ripples produced by the gentle wind playing on the placid surface of the river. This is a new structural detail that is purposely introduced here by Sankara. The middle waist region of the Goddess round the navel is supposed to present a mystery, into the depths of which only a wise man can penetrate, as it is evidently meant to be understood here.

The structure of absolute Space has been a major headache with modern scientists. Space is said to have a curvature in the context of Einsteinian relativism. There is also non-Euclidian space, solar space, topological space, vectorial space, as also the structure of space as understood by Minkowski, Lobachevski and Riemann. We have hitherto kept in mind our own structural pattern of two cones placed base to base. We have elsewhere suggested that these two cones could also be placed apex to apex, when the position of the structure is pushed from the bottom of the vertical scale to the top. We get an ontological "universal concrete" here-and-now locus when the cones are placed base to base at the bottom. The converse of the same, where "universal elsewhere" and "universal nowhere" meet in an intelligible point of light at the meeting point of the apexes, rather than the bases, or similar cones, could be imagined on the numerator side; instead of a "universal here-and-now" we would get a "universal elsewhere" when the perspective is thus changed.

In this verse we are concerned with the middle region of the Goddess. A special kind of magic or mystery is supposed to be hiding here which requires the wise man to see. The ontological basis becomes abolished in favor of a teleological one. When the apex points of two inverted cones come into contact, there is a point of beauty or interest where they participate. This is the central locus to be kept in mind in respect of this verse. This point is what is referred to in the first line as an enigmatic

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"something" placed at the center of the slender waist. The words *yad etad*, "this something" (which is seen), justify the location of such a point of participation, which could be said to be both visible and invisible to the eyes of a fully informed Advaita philosopher. Thus, the slenderness of the waist and the point of interest at the locus are understood by us from this first line.

The second line refers to superfine ripples, which, read together with the fourth line, are produced by the impact of the solid metalic pot-like breasts and postulated for the purpose of revealing the fine structure applicable to this mid-region where motherhood can freely function. The apellation "Auspicious Mother" *(śiva janani)* would indicate that such a sacred idea of motherhood is in the mind of the poet also.

In the fourth line there is reference to *tanū bhūtam vyomam*, which we have translated as "space reduced to etherial particles". Physicists have postulated something like ether as the medium for the propagation of light, but no ponderable ether has been proved by the repeated Michelson-Morley experiment. Ether thus remains to us an ambiguity equally relied upon by both physicists and metaphysicians as a kind of absolute Substance, both material and mental, within which a measurable velocity of light could be calculated or postulated. We shall not examine the fine epistemological status of this *vyoma*, or space, but treat it as a kind of neutral medium, both mental and material at once. The collision of the two pots representing the breasts of the Goddess produce vibrations which cut at right angles to the natural ripples produced by the wind on the surface of a river. As the river flows downwards, toward the navel of the Goddess, it is to be imagined as becoming subterranean. The outside world and its space are turned into an inside world, in terms of some kind of negative or pseudo-space. Outside can become inside in topological or projective space. Right-angled triangles can become obtuse or acute-angled ones by expansion or contraction of space. Inside can become outside by a Mobius strip inversion. A one to one correspondence in relative positions, vectorially or tensorially understood, could still be maintained. Euclidean axioms can give place to revised ones known to modern non-Euclidean geometry. Right and left could be interchanged by torsions or rotations round an axis. The navel of the

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Goddess is going to be compared to a frozen whirlpool in the next verse.

It thus requires a great deal of what is also known to modern mathematicians to sympathize even barely with what Sankara is saying here. He cannot be easily dismissed as a man of superstitious belief. It must be assumed that contemplation can get certain theoretical intuitions that sciences also get through more positive or demonstrable laboratory-based disciplines. Axiomatic thinking and experimental thinking have to meet in either case. Eddington is known to be a non-experimental physicist. Mathematics is mainly axiomatic in its status as a discipline. Thus, what intuition can guess from one side can meet what laboratory disciplines can reconstruct from the other side. When they meet, as Bertrand Russell would put it, the marriage of these two rival approaches can take place. On our part, we believe that Sankara, in his own way, understood intuitively long ago what modern scientists are just beginning to understand. There are points of contact between the writings of Eddington and Sankara.

Without entering into this subject in too much detail, let us think of the "space reduced to ethereal particles" in the third line *(tanū bhūtam vyomam)*. We could easily concede that waves or ripples could be of two kinds. The main waves have a simple harmonic movement, as between crest and trough, which properly measured is called "wavelength," while "frequency" is a kind of sinuous movement, vibrating more quickly, where the amplitude and shortness give it an intensity rather than a length. If one is magnetic, the other could be said to be electromagnetic. Maxwell and Fourier have studied the laws of the propagation of waves both of sound and of light; and modern television and the use of the magnetic tape to serve purposes of light or sound propagation have got many secrets, all of which depend upon the uniformity of the laws applicable to the propagation of light and of electromagnetic impulses. An antenna can conduct all these impulses intact and reproduce them thousands of miles away on television screens placed in the drawing rooms of modern houses. Thus, the disappearance of two sets of waves, in the form of ethereal particles, into the cavity of the navel of the Goddess is at least not to be considered merely as a mythological exaggeration.

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It is also possible to think of the structure of space as revealed in crystallography, where cross-polarized light can produce strange interference figures, sometimes suggesting the embryonic stages of some simple animals, together with what is called "optical movements." Crystals are supposed to have a lattice-like grating in their structural makeup conforming to units of different solid polygons. They are sometimes referred to as "gratings," through which light is reflected, refracted, or diffracted into variegated colored patterns, which also seem to be revealed in nuclear structure. We have already said that the surface of some fruits represent light patterns belonging to outer space. The conversion of outer space into inner space is a magic that takes place at what is referred to here as the navel of the Goddess.

The impact of the metallic breasts finds mention in Verse 80 also. The "universal concrete" can have an accentuated material solidity. Matter is defined as something that impenetrably occupies space. This is a quality of exclusiveness of the extraneous, and thus a highly horizontalized tendency or impetus found at the heart of existence, which can express itself in fluid verticality or solid horizontality. The impact of two solids will produce vertical lines of force resembling ripples. Thus, wavelengths and horizontal free amplitudes can break up pure space into ethereal particles. Probabilities and possibilities, parameters or perimeters, expressing qualitative or quantitative processes of growth or becoming in the general flux of life, could all be thought of in abstract terms, with the deep navel region of the Goddess treated as the lake in this verse.

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sthiro gaṅgāvartaḥ stanamukuḷa romāvali latā-
kalāvālam kuṇḍam kusuma śara tejo huta bhujaḥ
rater līlāgāram kim api tava nābhir girisute
biladvāram siddher giriśa nayanānām vijayate.

Oh Daughter of the Peak, Your navel reigns supreme as a stilled Gangetic whirlpool,
As the fecund flowerbed of the creeper bearing Your bud-like breasts,
As the sacrificial fire pit for receiving Kāma's glory and for Rati as her pleasure bower,
While to the eyes of the Mountain Lord, the cavern mouth for the fruition of his austerities.

Verse 78 further confirms the schematic status of the region marked by the navel. The value or function that it represents or fulfills could be varied, but there is always a substratum that continues to be the same. The latitudes, longitudes or equators marked on a globe are not real, but are only meant to be references. Ships, as they cross the equator, do not cross any black line, which is only found on the map for the guidance of the mariner. Charting only makes the high seas more easily navigable. If the ship's compass works correctly, officers can be trained to pilot the ships to safety with the help of such charted indications. Thus, the schematic markings could be said to be real to the extent that they have a value. A waterfall might keep its shape unaltered through the years, with slight variations permitted for the seasons. Cascades are thus recognizable by name as well as by form, through centuries. Jog falls have four such cascades, each named after a lady. When Heraclitus says that one cannot enter into the same river twice, the river is given the paradoxical status of being a flux as well as a reality with a name. It is in this sense that we have to understand what is said in this verse.

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The navel of the Goddess need not be only a lake, as described in Verse 76. Alternatively it could be one of the other four analogies enumerated in this verse. The first analogy is of a whirlpool in the Ganges, which is not to be understood as actually petrified or frozen, but simply as a lasting schematic pattern conforming to the shape of a whirlpool. When the analogy is changed to a biological context the navel becomes a hotbed for flowers to grow. The breasts are then compared to the effects that are produced from such a common source. In the structural image proper to Vedic sacrifice the same navel could be compared to the hollow in which the sacrificial fire is lit, receiving offerings of clarified butter into it, which are meant to glorify the function of eroticism for the benefit of the sacrificer, Kāma. But to the wife of Kāma it is a cool bower where, instead of being burnt, she finds the rest and pleasure she needs, as a negative principle of negentropy rather than entropy. The same navel could be compared to a cavern for Siva, whose only interest in life is to find a quiet place for meditation so that he could get away from it all, while still remaining paradoxically right within the core of the situation. This paradox, which is of the essence of the Absolute, can be expected to abolish itself when all the polyvalent implications of this central locus, which constitute a profound mystery in themselves, are fully understood as belonging together to a schematic whole. Each component has its own function, whose plus and minus are cancelable against each other, leaving behind the wonder of the Absolute as a supreme value.

The glory of Kāma cannot operate within a vacuum. It must have some kind of locus or receptacle, just as clarified butter must fall within the core of the fire kindled in a hollow. Rati's need is not a hollow, which she already represents by her negativity, but something that will protect her against the heat normal to the numerator side of the total situation. Hence, to her, the navel becomes a bower affording shade and coolness from the rays which are likely to be too hot for life, on the positive side of the total situation. When thinking of the analogy it would be helpful to conceive of the orientation of this lake as being within a conic section of solid geometry, instead of the two-dimensional context of the surface of paper normal to the *śrī cakra*. Fire burns upward, water flows horizontally. To turn a lake into a

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fire pit requires a revised orientation so as to fit it into the schema without violating the structure of space known to some kind of geometry or other. All these are left to the imagination of the reader.

The last line would suggest that Siva's austerities are not unlike an organic process in which one perfection succeeds another form of perfection, as his austerities progress in their eternal course. When the duality of ends and means in austerities is abolished, such a process of becoming amounts to fruition in the eternal present. Thus interpreted, it will not detract even a little from the absolutist quality of the *tapas* or pure austerity proper to Siva in the context of the positive Absolute, for whom Pārvati herself is the negative reference. He is always to be given this function, though totally inactive, for, as stated in the very first verse, he is present merely as an "unmoved mover" or catalyzer. Nature cannot operate without this agent, which has only a thin logical status.

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nisarga kṣiṇasya stana taṭa bhareṇa klamajuṣo
naman mūrter nārī tilaka śanakais truṭyata iva
ciram te maddhyasya truṭita taṭinī tīra taruṇā
samāvasthāsthemno bhavatu kuśalam śaila tanaye.

For Your waist, oh Best of Women—naturally slim, fatigued by the weight of Your bust form,
With a figure bent down and on the point of breaking,
Having the equality of the stable state of a tree on a collasping brookbank,
Oh Mountain-born One—let there be security forever.

Verse 79 is addressed to the "Best of Women", more literally to the "Beauty spot of womanhood." Sankara has written other verses in which he touchingly says that he cost his mother a lot of emaciation and suffering in the act of giving birth to her child, as is normal to all mothers, through all time, anywhere. Maternity viewed in this way is a form of martyrdom that women have to pass through and deserve, and for this reason there is the praise and gratitude of all humans born from the mother's womb. The aptness of the apostrophe employed in this verse is therefore perfect, motherhood being the central function of womanhood.

There is reference to the slimness of the waist again here, and also a reference to fatigue due to the weight of the bust. In the second line there is a reference to the disastrous predicament of a possible breaking of the vertical support. A tree standing on the sands next to a deep canyon-like formation cannot maintain its stable and erect position, as the narrow brook below keeps eroding the earth deeper and deeper. Beside the problem of breaking the mid-region of the waist, there is a more seriously precarious position of the whole tree slanting or falling to any side at any moment. The tragedy of incertitude in personal life cannot be portrayed in any more forcible language than that

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which is adopted here in the name of the status of the pure principle of Motherhood. The reference to the bent figure in the second line underlines the pain and suffering that is involved in childbearing. The canyon like formation, where the brook flows very deep, is to bring out the profundity of the inner space in which this zone of tragic incertitude is to be located. The reference to the father and the absence of reference to the husband are also to be noticed. We are on the negative side of the situation, where the flagpost and banner proper to Verse 73 and the reference to Siva's reputation are seen to be left behind. Here we have a figure, which has already appeared as early as Verse 7 where the proud *puruṣika* and recumbent motherhood were inserted into the same complex schematic dynamism. The nature of the danger in regard to the middle region snapping is to be brought out in the next verse. The worst trials of motherhood, according to Sankara here, exist in finding some stable ground on which life could thrive with stability and steadiness. It is just these factors that stand in danger where womanhood and its specific functions tend to be most pronounced. The stability of the mountain from whom she is descended is the only feature that can supply what she herself lacks in respect of that function of maternity, for which this region of her body stands.

The central prayer in this verse is the concern of the author for the safety of the middle rigion of the Goddess. The beauty here could be called a tragic predicament rather than a colorful one, as hitherto presented.

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kucau sadyaḥ svidyat taṭa ghaṭita kūrpāsabhidurau
kaṣantau dormūle kanaka kalaśābhau kalayatā
tava trātum bhaṅgād alam iti valagnam tanu bhuvā
tridhā naddham devī trivali lavalīvallibhir iva.

Oh Goddess, having made Your twin breasts gain the beauty
of gold pots,
Rubbing at the upper arms, bursting the bodice and presently
perspiring—
The maker whereof, the God of Love, now wanting to save
Your threefold waist
From breaking, saying, "Enough!" with threefold strands of a
wild creeper has now bound it.

The same predicament found in Verse 79 is presented in a slightly more accentuated form in the present verse. Here, the accentuating condition that makes the danger worse is not the womanhood in itself, as in the previous verse, but the factor of eroticism personified, called the God of Love. Womanly nature in itself is not responsible for exaggerations of certain tendencies at certain times that become accentuated within the scope of the total personality of the Goddess. When a mature mango drops to the ground, that is not considered an advantage from the standpoint of the tree itself. Horizontalization involves an accentuation of certain tendencies at the expense of others. If one should lop off the side branches of a tree, the main branch will gain in strength by the extra sap available for its growth upward. The pruning of fruit trees implies the recognition of such a complementarity principle of growth. In cultivating a frail plant, like a tomato, the intelligent gardener often clips away the side branches and retains the main one. When the plant becomes fully laden with fruit, the careful gardener supports the frail stem by binding it to a stick to keep the main stem uprigth.

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The heavy weight of the fruitage might tend to snap the vertical stem, and that would spell the disaster implied here.

The function of maternity is directly proportionate to the function of natural eroticism operating within the harmonized system of normal womanhood. Maternity is not a sin because of its libidinous implications. Sex is only a sin in the eyes of an angry God in the garden of Eden, where it is referred to as a "forbidden fruit." This does not mean that there is no place for an eroticism that is fully human and natural. The Bhagavad Gita allows for this by saying that when sex does not violate the norms of right conduct and is fully compatible with human nature in its basic tendencies, which it must share with all living beings, it is a kind of *kāma*, or passion, which is to be identified with the principle of the Absolute itself. This principle is represented by Kṛṣṇa, who says, "I am myself pure passion of this kind" (VII: 11), thus taking away the sense of guilt from eroticism. Although Semitic and prophetic religions have denounced sex, as in the *Song of Solomon*, erotic mysticism is seen to be allowed as in the *Gīta Govindam* and other works openly based on erotic mysticism in India. Kṛṣṇa stealing the clothes of *gopis* (female cowherds) and hiding in the trees is a favorite Rajput theme emblazoned on tapestries which are still admired in modern drawing rooms in the West. Here, beauty is the subject, not sin. Thus, Kāma is admitted as a sufficiently dignified functionary in in this work, as we have already seen as early as Verses 5 and 6. In fact there are two rival functions to be recognized here: one in charge of horizontalizing tendencies, and the other which is normal to womanhood. Eroticism can assert itself strongly or lightly in different types of women, the same way that both Gaṇeśa and Subrahmaṇya could escape the carnal aspect of life. In womanhood especially the accentuation of vitalistic tendencies can never be considered as a drawback. No cow could be bad because it gives milk as a result of its vitalism. Jesus would not curse a fig tree except for its sterility. What is a virtue with Siva need not necessarily be a virtue with Pārvati.

We notice that the God of love is the maker of the horizontalized maturation of the two breasts, which are said to rub against the upper arms because of their fulness. The bursting of the bodice is reminiscent of the nurse Peggotty in Dickens' *David*

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Copperfield, whose buttons are said to be bursting each time she embraces the boy; so this is an old joke not unknown to English literature. Perspiration is also an indication of an extreme erotic state of mind, as referred to in Kālidāsa's *Śākuntaḷam*. While on one side Kāma accentuates horizontal sin, on the other side he is much concerned about the danger of the waist snapping when overladen with heavy fruit. The beauty here consists of tragic and comic elements in delicate interplay, neither of which is allowed to predominate and spoil the balance or harmony. Before the last straw enters into the situation, Kāma steps in saying, "Enough, enough!" though he himself induced it horizontally. In order to keep the stem from breaking he props it up and binds it with three strands of a wild creeper, so that it could still stand erect. The three strands represent the three levels through which verticality has to pass to transcend the over accentuation of any one of them. The way of transcending the three nature modalities *(guṇas)* has been examined already in Verses 53 and 54. What applies there at a high level should also apply by the extrapolation, below, to the middle region of the waist. The gold pots under reference here are found also in Kāḷidāsa's poetry in the context of watering plants to help their growth. Compared with ruby pots, these might suggest a lower position in the hierarchical scale of values. Here it is not solidity that counts, but the golden coloration or brightness *(ābha)*.

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gurutvam vistāram kṣitidhara patiḥ pārvati nijān-
nitambād ācchidya tvayi haraṇa rūpeṇa nidadhe
ataste vistīrṇo gurur ayam aśeṣām vasumatīm
nitamba prāgbhāraḥ sthagayati laghutvam nayati ca.

Ponderability and extensiveness, oh Pārvati, the
Earth-supporting Lord once bestowed on You as dowry,
Cutting them off from his own hips;
Thus, these, Yours here, both weighty and expansive, cancel out the whole world
And by prior substantiality confer lightness on it too,

There are many theories for slimming down known to beauty specialists and physical culturists. Though they are much advertised by those who recommend the regimes or medicaments, there seems to be no agreement about why certain persons are fat and others slim. A certain kind of obesity or fatty degeneracy might result from age. Hormones or enzymes might have their own roles. Sexual dimorphism is noticeable in certain animals. The queen bee tends to be big while the male is relatively small, and in certain varieties of leeches the male is so small that it can permanently find a place inside the sex organ of the female.

A scrutiny of the contents of this verse reveals that it could not be interpreted meaningfully in the light of any of the contexts suggested above. We notice here that it is the father, who is a mountain personified, that confers on his daughter, who is aptly called Pārvari (Daughter of the Mountains), his own "ponderability and extensiveness" in the form a wedding gift, so that her married life could be easier at a later date. A mountain is both massive and peaked. The peak represents the verticalized aspect, while the massiveness represents the extensive and ponderable aspects. If the former is considered in principle to belong to the numerator side of the situation, then the latter could belong to

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the same context while representing, in principle again, the denominator side of the same situation. It is suggested in this verse that the father cut off "ponderability and extensiveness" from himself and made them into a present to constitute a dowry, in the form of a value or wealth, out of concern for his daughter's welfare later in life.

At the end of the verse it is suggested that the Goddess became again light and slim by some kind of personal readjustment, which must have taken place after her marriage with Siva. The high numerator value that Siva represents must have helped in accentuating the process of verticalization of the heavy and extensive hips of the Goddess, which were so much so as to equal in epistemological status the whole world, as indicated in the third line. The idea is that ponderability as well as extensiveness could be viewed under two conflicting perspectives, as in the case of conjugates like time and space. Time can devour space and space time, both according to Descartes as well as in the overall context of Einsteinian space and time relationships. *Res cogitans* and *res extenso* are treated by Descartes as correlates which can interact to absorb or abolish each other. Sankara's own philosophy must have had affinities, however vague, with the views which have come into acceptance in the modern world of science. When time is included in the scheme, we get the notion of a continuum in which both time and space enter as equal partners. It would be reading too much into the meaning of these verses if we should suggest that all the implications of the inertial or gravitational field of the Restricted Theory of Relativity of Einstein, as well as the fourth dimensional perspective of the General Theory of Relativity are known to, or even roughly understood, by Sankara. We have already indicated that axiomatic and experimental disciplines can be expected one day to meet and verify each other. In the case of this particular verse, without being open to the charge of reading into it more than is there, it would still be quite safe to assert that basically the intuttions involved in the theories originating in the context of Western science and those already present in Vedanta cover at least the same problems, each in its own particular fashion. In fact, there is a growing tenedncy among modern scientists to suggest a linking bridge between Vedanta, Zen Buddhism or

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ancient Chinese thought based on the *yang* and *yin*. Oppenheimer, Schrodinger and Niels Bohr have indulged in such cross-reference from time to time in their writings. Schrodinger even quotes Sankaracarya and suggests that a methodological and epistemological revision must take place if science is to answer such questions as he puts about himself as he watches the alpine glow on Mt. Blanc. He puts the pointed question about his own personal status if his mother had decided to marry another man. The whole question brings us face to face with the grand process of flux or becoming, in which a personal presence is involved. Time and space, quantity and quality, velocity and energy: all such conjugates begin then to create a world of uncertainty, or *māya*, as those who have correct visions of it, like Sankara, were able to visualize long ago.

This verse contains a challenge which refused to be met by any other less wholesale point of view than the one natural to Advaita Vedanta, which states, as Bergson also does in his philosophy, that the whole of reality is a form of flux in terms of an *elan vital* (vital impetus). The definition of Sankara conforms essentially to the same eternal process of becoming, which is called *anādi bhāva rūpa* (of the form of a beginningless becoming). Heraclitus, whom even Bertrand Russel finds acceptable, also accepts such a flux as the basis of his philosophy. The last two lines of Verse 77 underlined the status of the Goddess here finally as conforming to the flux of *māya*. We have been obliged to make these bold general remarks in order to give even some kind of barely consistent meaning to the content of the present verse.

"Ponderability" *(gurutvam)* must refer to the world of inertia or gravitation. "Extensiveness" *(vistāram)* must refer to the world of space understood in the abstract. The words of the first line suggesting a dowry given in anticipation, and the regaining of lightness of substance suggested by the words "prior substantiality," which is our translation of *prāg bhāraḥ (prāg* means "anterior," *bhāraḥ* means "weight"), as applied to the hips of the Goddess here, contain prospective or retrospective elements in reference to the dimension called time. Thus the verse has necessarily to presuppose, in our eyes, a kind of unified field theory tacitly understood, in broad outline at least, by the

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penetrating minds of philosophers like Sankara, and which perhaps anticipates some of the further developments and connections likely to take place in the formulation of a unified field theory, which it was the unrealized ambition of Einstein to offer to the scientific world before he died. The same could be said, more or less, of the fate of the great dream of Leibniz to present a pattern or characteristic based on a universal form or mathematical language. This was another dream of a great genius that was frustrated.

Let us try to go over the actual words of this verse in the light of these general remarks. We could paraphrase the lines as follows: "Being born of the King of Mountains, who possessed the extensiveness of a massive mountain formation, and ponderability, (because all matter must have the quality of weight), you must have inherited, at the time of separation from your family to go to the family of your husband, this kind of wealth in a form which could combine both quantitative and qualitative aspects." The peak represents kinghood as a unique qualitative characteristic, and so the father did not have to depend on more quantitative or inertial aspects of his personality when the daughter went away. This explains the suggestion in the second line that he cut off actual "ponderability and extensiveness" from the lower levels of his own schematized personality. After marriage, in middle age, women tend to put on weight especially in anticipation of childbirth, by virtue of which weightiness of the hips and breasts becomes accentuated. Here in Verse 81, where we have descended far into the negative ontological side of the totality of what the Goddess represents, it is the ponderability of the hips with which we are more directly concerned. We must think in terms of more quantitative factors like weight, inertia and space. There could be space-like inertia and space-like weighty inertia. When verticalization and horizontalization get neutralized or balanced against each other, the world itself could be treated as consisting of time-like space or space-like time. This could be understood in terms of the Lorentz Transformation and the Fitzgerald Contraction. Thus when such a revision is applied to the Goddess here, it is quite correct to say that the whole world could be cancelled out by its own counterpart, attributed to the person of the Goddess.

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The last line refers to the losing of the weight of what was once heavy. This can be explained by a vertical form of cancellation which can be induced by the influence of the highly austere and pure verticalized principle that Siva represents, influencing the total situation without being directly involved in it. Vedantic logic would permit prior and posterior substantiality to belong together, as in the context of clay being spoken of as representing the anterior non-existence of the pot. There are four kinds of non-existence acceptable to the Nyaya school of Indian logic, which are anterior non-existence *(prāg abhāva)*, mutual non-existence *(anyonyābhāva)*, ultimate non-existence *(atyantābhāva)* and posterior non-existence *(pradhvamsābhāva)*. Non-existence is known in *Tantra śāstra* as a *padārtha* ("word content" or "substance"). *Abhāva* (non-existence) is one of the seven *padārthas* (significant substances) categorized by the Nyaya school, negation being considered as real as minus one is in mathematics. It is not quite real to say that one could not get ten oranges from a shop on credit, which would not mean that the debt is not real; it is real in a negative sense.

Such are some of the intricacies of Indian logic, tacitly accepted by Vedanta, on the basis of which alone this verse can make cogent meaning at all. The confirmation that we could derive from modern scientific theorization lends support to the same, as we have tried to explain above. Two children in different parts of the world could be seen playing the same game of marbles. This does not mean that one set of boys learned it from the other. We need not, therefore, vainly try to establish any extra credit for one side or the other; to do so would be childish.

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karīndrāṇām śuṇḍān kanaka kadaḷī kāṇḍa paṭalīm-
ubhābhyām ūrubhyām ubhayam api nirjitya bhavati
suvṛttābhyām patyuḥ praṇati kaḍhinābhyām giri sute
vidhijñe jānubhyām vibudha kari kumbha dvayam api.

Your two thighs surpass both the best of elephant trunks and
groups of golden banana stems;
Your goodly rounded callosities, due to daily devotions
To Your Lord, outdo even the twin frontal knobs of the
heavenly elephant,
Fully aware as You are of right obligations, oh Mountain
Daughter triumphant.

In Verse 82 the locus of beauty, round which we have to put three circles in order to fix the correct perspective by which we are to appreciate the overwhelming beauty factor, consists of the thigh and leg region. It is comparatively easier to describe the beauty of the face or eyes, because we naturally turn to facial features when disposed to admire women. We have now systematically descended from the rubyhood of the gem-set crown of the Goddess, through the parted hair to the forehead, and further descended beyond the navel to now arrive at the region below the hips, but not yet reaching down fully to the feet. Beauty is not of a conceptual order any more. Concepts, if any, have to be put into the beauty by us. Within the domain of experience we have also to find an analogy that will interpret for us the nature of the absolute Beauty which is always arrived at only after transcending duality or paradox. There is an ascending as well as a descending dialectical approach, which, when employed together, will enable us to dissolve the paradox. Paradox, if allowed to exist, can vitiate the picture through ambivalence and duality, by revealing the fabric to be threadbare throughout, as it were, which is otherwise meant to be of a uniform texture.

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The first-dimensional context here has to present us with a sufficiently realistic picture, within the framework of which apparent dualities are permissible for purposes of clarification, in order to bring out the underlying unity later on when deeper abstractions could be allowed in a serial succession. Thus it is that we see a reference in this verse to two familiar organic growths in nature. One of them is the trunk of an elephant, and the other is banana tree with a very polished and heavy stem that tapers beautifully upward, with a glossy polished golden surface that is also natural to the thighs of a beautiful woman. It is better for a beautiful woman's thighs to err on the side of strength, by which her gait and stability could be made steady and firmly established. Weakness, even in such muscular qualities, cannot be considered anything other than a liability factor in the context of beauty. The suppleness of the elephant's trunk would give it a prehensile form of strength by which it could uproot strongly planted trees. The voluntary and involuntary muscles that co-operate in the making of a firm and beautiful thigh region have thus to be thought of in an ambivalent two-sided fashion. Afferent as well as efferent nervous impulses have to co-operate if the Goddess is to have a dignified and dicisive gait. It is not the quality of one elephant trunk or one banana tree that we have to keep in mind here. We have to abstract the two required qualities of beauty from many trees and many elephant trunks. Thus, there will be an outer polish and an inner strength conferring beauty and stability upon this region, which is more existential in its value than theoretical. The mention made of the golden stem is a colorful reference to the complexion, while deeper factors are not omitted.

The second half of the verse adds another and deeper significance to the legs, whose two parts meet at the kneecap. Beauty in a Goddess comes to her not just because she is beautiful physically, her mental dispositions must also contain the same beauty in a sufficiently dignified form. What is such a beauty that could apply to the physical limbs, standing, as it were, on the existential side? The body as a mortal coil is not dignified enough for high philosophical contemplation. What is it good for then, in the context of absolute Beauty, except to somehow contribute to the glorification of a high numerator factor implied in the total value of the Absolute? The Bhagavad

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Gita mentions that we could practice contemplation by means of the body. In other words, we can press into service an inert lump of flesh called the body to somehow glorify the Absolute, however low it might be in a scale of spirituality. According to the Bhagavad Gita what one could do with one's body by way of making it subserve spiritual purposes, as best it can, would be to cultivate straight forwardness or calmness, failing which it could be made to worship wise men or spiritual teachers, including whatever divinities one is capable of revering by prostrations, etc. Otherwise the body would prove itself a hindrance to contemplation. The Goddess here, in the last line, is referred to as being one who is fully aware of inevitable obligations.

A *sannyāsi* might protest against all obligations and say to himself, "I am a wise man, and I am above all obligatory duties, which are only meant for less evolved souls than myself." There is a subtle lacuna or hiatus in this kind of attitude by which necessary forms of action in which human life is caught, whether one likes it or not, are not given normal importance. Breathing is a necessary function, and even if one has become very wise it would be wrong to forget to breathe. What is necessary cannot be bypassed by mere omission. One has to sublimate one's instinctive dispositions by gradations or normal activities and not by refusing to recognize their presence in one's system. Yoga is a process by which obligations are first recognized as necessary and then transcended by a form of sublimating practice. One cannot live in a vacuum, and the Goddess here is fully aware of this verity, which the Bhagavad Gita makes unequivocally clear throughout its various chapters referring to action and inaction. The last chapter refers to the difference between a *tyāgi* (a renouncer) and a *sannyāsi* (a man who claims to do without the obligatory ritualism of the Vedas).

The Devi here puts her legs to proper use, according to herself, and is represented as having developed on her knees beautiful circular callosities, which indicate that she must have been kneeling and praying to her Lord, Siva, secretly everyday for long periods. The callosities here are supposed to be beauty spots, as are the golden pot-like rounded breasts which were referred to earlier. The knees are beautiful, in their own way, at

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a lower level of human existence, which is steeped in necessities. Between a contingent form of the practice of devotion which can be done, for example, by muttering charms, and the necessary form of the same practice of devotion, there is a subtle form of qualitative difference. A large quantity of small change is required to equal a gold coin. If the post office does not sell a one dollar stamp, one will be obliged to buy many stamps of a lower count. The thighs of the Goddess would not be performing any contemplative function at all if they were not given some proper work to do. If words have a rich spiritual value, actions have also a value, but with the difference that while understanding is like gold in its value, physical actions are of an inferior grade compared to the gold. They could be said to be of the value of an iron city rather than a golden or silver city, in terms of the three cities of values destroyed by Siva when he descended from Chidambaram. When the callosities gain, due to the number of times Pārvati kneels in praise of Siva as a concept, both the numerator Siva value and the value represented by the beauty of the collosities would cancel each other out, revealing a non-dual value, the Absolute. It is in this sense that the frontal knobs of the elephant are outdone by the callosities on the legs of the Goddess. The justification for such a correspondence between the two sets of rounded protuberances has already been suggested as early as Verse 7, where the frontal bulges of a calf elephant are referred to as analogously equivalent in beauty to the maidenly breasts of a young damsel. The metaphor might seem to be rather farfetched and mixed up, unless it is seen in the light of the importance of recognizing the totality of the value of the Absolute, of which only a structural analysis can reveal the component relational factors.

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parājetum rudram dviguṇa śara garbhau girisute
niṣaṅgau jaṅghe te viṣama viśikho bāṭham akṛta
yad agre dṛśyante daśa śara phalāḥ pāda yugalī
nakhāgra cchadmānas suramakuṭa śāṇaika niśitāḥ.

Your twin legs, looking like pillars, are the quivers
Made by the God of Love for giving battle to Siva;
They show at their bases ten arrowheads, simulating nails,
The whetstones on which they are solely sharpened are
the crowns of the gods.

This verse marks the close of a descending series started as early as Verse 42. The next verse contains a tacit signature which has to be added to the four or five others that we have pointed out already under (Verse 75). Here the locus of beauty to be kept in mind is the brightness of the nails showing from beneath the feet of the Goddess; and the absolute status of the Beauty of these shining nails emerges just from the fact that they are to be sharpened exclusively on the crowns of the gods who are on the numerator side, whose number could be ten so that one nail could have one crown for its whetstone. A whetstone has to be harder than the instrument it whets, or at least equal in hardness. One cannot cut glass with a piece of soap. In point of hardness, therefore there is implied here a one to one corresdondence between the crowns and the nails of the toes of the Goddess. When thus canceled out between head to foot factors of beauty, a certain totality of beauty emerges, with which perspective this series of descending *cakras* is meant here to touch at its natural terminus for the present.

The question might be asked why Kāma sharpens the ten toe nails. The answer is contained on the second line: it is to give battle to Siva. It might again be asked, where the ten gods range on the numerator side. They are only demiurges, for the toenails representing the arrowheads of Kāma don't require the unique omega-point of intensity or hardness to be effectively sharpened. His arrows are not stern enough stuff to really vanquish Siva, except on an occasion when Siva might descend somewhat from the height of his own proper omega-point. Such an

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occasion does not take place ordinarily. The crowns of the demiurge-gods are sufficiently hard for making the arrows of Kāma sharp enough for operations within the lesser value system to which he belongs. Below the level of the nails are the soles of the Goddess' feet which are going to be referred to in Verse 84. Thus, the one to one cancellation for the purposes of this verse is to take place between the sharpness of the toenails, as a denominator factor, and the hardness of the whetstones which are the crowns of the gods, representing a numerator factor. Such are some of the overall features which we have to keep in mind before examining the further details of this verse.

In the previous verse the reference came as far down as the legs, to the beautifully rounded knee region. The legs and feet below the knee region are compared here to duplicated pillar-like quivers, within which the arrows stand upside down and not in a position ready to be used directly against Siva, who is placed at the omega-point by us for the sake of structural consistency. This inversion is not due to any oversight. In a magnet, positive lines of force and negative lines of force face contrary directions. The five toes have five arrowheads. This is meant to suggest that there is such a fivefold structure on which the human body is built.

Sankara elsewhere refers to this plan based on two sets of five tiers of duplicated fives, making one hundred, which when thought of as flames or fires, reveals the implied structure of what is referred to as *Pancāgni vidya* (the secret knowledge of the fivefold fires), which Naciketas is to learn from the God of Death in the *Katha Upanishad*, as one of the lesser wisdom secrets in addition to full-fledged *brahmavidya*. With this lesser secret knowledge, the God of Death intends to dissuade Naciketas from asking for the last boon of absolute Wisdom. Sankara builds up an eightfold ensemble of cities built on a fivefold plan, consisting of: five functions, such as speech, etc, five functions, such as hearing, etc, five vital functions, five chief points of the compass (including the upward one), intelligence, with its five subdivisions, the fivefold desires, the corresponding five-fold ignorances and the fivefold tendencies to action— which, when added to the 100 already given, gives us the 108 syllables of *AUM*, which are to be repeated when we have to remember gurus, worshipable saints or gods.

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Here, when we come to the lower levels of action at least, there is the duplication of the two legs, left and right, which can be abolished if we turn the structure by 90 degrees. The question of whether each arrowhead needs the separate crown of a distinct god could be kept open, because there is not any specific reference to such a duplication on the numerator side.

The first line further refers to a pillar as an apt analogy for the lower part of the legs. Stable support for the body is very important when we think of the chief function of this lower half of the leg. Thus the pillar analogy is quite justified. The pillars are described as "made by the God of Love." In what sense is eroticism interested in making pillars for the body? Activity means movement, and erotic persons have to seek their mates, male or female, in a place other than the one which they find themselves in. Thus, the organ of locomotion has a direct bearing on the function of eroticism in its most basic sense. But true eroticism is not of this basic kind. It contains verticalized inner principles of attraction and repulsion within the peripheral, or horizontal, outer shell.

It is in the brightness of the nails that the existence of these arrows pointing negatively (downward) could be guessed or discerned, because they are hardly visible to a superficial view of the legs. The arrowheads are said in the third line to be more real than the nails. The nails are only real in a two-dimensional sense, but the arrowheads are real in a three-dimensional sense and could even attain to a four-dimensional absolutist status when their one-sided brightness is increased by being whetted on their own proper counterparts, the crown of gods. A three-dimensionally real arrow needs to be whetted upon a more than three-dimensionally hard crown to increase its brilliance and to make it tend, by such a cancellation, toward the absolute Beauty that is to result from this situation. It is true that the nails are hard, but the arrowheads are harder. They can only be whetted on something which is of a greater hardness than the material from which they are themselves made, something tending toward a diamond-hardness, which is at the limit in a scale of hardness that we could think of. All these grades of hardness have to belong to the context of a universal concrete hardness in an absolute overall sense, so as to be fitted without inconsistency

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into the highly ontologically biased picture of bright beauty that is still presented in this limiting verse of the series that terminates here.

The second line of our translation underlines the fact that it is the God of Love who is responsible for making the two pillars out of the legs of the Goddess. Man is a two-legged animal. Procreation of his kind is for him a basic function, and Kāma is the presiding deity for such a function. He is an absolute in his own domain, as far as it can reach upward, but his arrows cannot always fly high and vertically enough to defeat Siva. Siva's heart can be conquered only by the unique and absolute devotion of Parvati, who made her way to the water and stood there to practice severe austerities for forty days. God, in trying to create the brightest and most beautiful part of a woman's body, is said by Kālidāsa to have lavished his maximum possible artistic ability on creating that unique heel of Pārvati, which is depicted as walking to a lake so that she could stand in water for forty days to prove her love for Siva. In another sense, therefore, we could say that the stability and beauty of the legs of Parvati were conferred by the creator of Beauty itself. The heel and the sole do not yet figure in this verse; it must be for that reason that the two pillars and their stability are represented as being the handiwork of the God of Love, Kāma. In the next verse we shall pass on to the deeper implications of the feet of the Goddess.

The force of the word "solely" in the last line of this verse attains a consistency, because the one to one correspondence between the arrowheads of Kāma and the rows of gods attain to a self-sufficient cancelability, marking the limits within which erotic tendencies can live and move. A more verticalized version, as in Verse 84, would put Kāma out of commission altogether. There, instead of the target of hitting Siva, we have Sankarācārya as a student of wisdom presented as a supplicant at the alpha point. From Verse 84 through the end of the work, it is the sole of the feet touching its lower most limit, reaching even into the subhuman world, that comes into the various pictures presented. The wisdom supplicant comes directly under reference in the next verse as well as in Verse 98, while the intervening verses are meant to clarify further structural implications.

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śrutīnām mūrdhāno dadhati tava yau śekharatayā
mamāpyetau mātaḥ śirasi dayayā dhehi caraṇau
yayoḥ pādyam pāthaḥ paśupati jaṭā jūṭa taṭinī
yayorlākṣā lakṣmīr aruṇahari cūḍāmaṇi ruciḥ.

Oh Mother, Your twin feet, marking as they do the crest point of scriptural wisdom,
Worn as head ornament by You, as by me: kindly place both upon my head;
Water for their ablution is the brook in Siva's matted hair,
And the auspicious beauty of their red paste is the magenta glory of Viṣṇu's crown.

In Verse 84 there is a verticalized transposition of points of value references, all placed in the vertical axis. The limbs of an equation can be transposed from the right to the left or vice versa without changing the value of the truth involved in the equation. Here the feet of the previous verse, which stopped short at the level of the nails within the circle forming the domain proper to Kāma, are further viewed from the bottom and are meant to be transformed vertically upward. Lesser values are interposed which necessarily must have a vertical dimension, however shot, pushed and displaced upward successively, so as to make the soles of the feet correspond either to the top of the crown on the head or still further beyond such an ornamental crown to an even higher level. In other words, the feet could be placed adjustably at whatever level one likes to put them in the vertical scale. In passing from the bottommost limit of the alpha point, wearing the magenta paste on their soles, one could imagine the pair of feet being promoted to the zero-point of the total situation, which belongs to the Viṣṇu context (of preservation), as justified in the second verse. It is a magenta glory that represents the value pushed still higher toward the omega-point and one passes a jewelled crown representing conventional theological values of the order of the world of Indra, still relativistic

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and hedonistic in status. The crest point of scriptural wisdom, referred to in the first line of this verse, is where those values terminate and truly absolutist values prevail, which refer to the highest teachings of the Vedantic wisdom contained in the Upanishads, covering both Veda and Vedanta, here referred to as *śrutis* (wisdom heard directly from a guru). The value of such a wisdom is so high that it is considered worthy or being an ornament to any Goddess we could imagine, including the Goddess of this series of verses. Sankara seems to want to place his own head underneath this ornament representing the highest possible watermark of wisdom values ever. The crest jewel of wisdom could be worn by any real aspirant for wisdom, to which context Sankara here implies that he himself belongs, as well as by any imaginable Goddess of a theological context. The short phrase "as by me" justifies our thinking that Sankara wishes to substitute himself for whatever Goddess has been so far dealt with, for purposes of discourse or discussion, in these verses. This shows that a theological deity is not important for him.

The "both" here refers not to the crown but to the feet transposed in approximation to the omega point. These feet have to be washed by some kind of pure or sacred water that is placed still higher in the scale of values, which here are the little streams originating in the matted hair of Siva, the source of the heavenly Ganges. From Sankara's use of such water in the present context could be seen, in our eyes, the need for linking the different levels of value, through which the feet have been raised, together in a descending order. The heavenly Ganges is a streak of value, that descends to earth to benefit mortals situated horizontally here below. In mythology it is represented as a thin stream descending out of the matted hair of Siva. Without the obstruction offered by the matted hair, the flood will be too powerful and would endanger the safety of the world. That is the idea under reference here. Thus after passing the crest jewel of wisdom, the ablution waters derived from the heavenly Ganges could continue to descend, washing against the ruby-colored crest jewel of the lower Viṣṇu system of values, and finally benefitting mankind in a more humble and earthly sense. The prayer requesting both the feet to be placed on the head of the supplicant gives this verse a touch of intimacy, while

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respecting ontological realism to its fullest extent. If there is one doctrine which is dear to the teaching of Vedanta as authoritatively contained in the *Brahma Sūtras*, it is this respect for the ontological concreteness of the Absolute, which is not to be mixed up with idealism such as that of Plato or of the Buddhist *Vijñāna vādins*. Both the feet are equally real, marking respectively the lower and the higher limits, where ontology begins and teleological axiology ends.

Our guess in the previous verse that the twin feet could be fused into one crown seems to be confirmed by the indication here that the crown represents twin feet on the numerator side. Twinning represents the last vestige of parity. It is a horizontal structural feature and, when transformed into its own verticalized version with an omega-point for reference, it abolishes its own parity in terms of a higher form of axial symmetry instead of bilateral parity. Right-handedness and left-handedness in this axial symmetry could be considered possible, because it is not bilateral anymore. From this verse onward we pass on to other subtler features of nominalism and structuralism treated together, the peculiarities of which we shall presently examine.

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namovākam brūmo nayana ramaṇīyāya padayos-
tavāsmai dvandvāya sphuṭa ruci rasālaktakavate
asūyaty atyantam yad abhihananāya spṛhayate
paśūnām īśānaḥ pramadavana kaṅkeḷi tarave.

Spoken words of worship we offer to Your twin feet,
Beauteous as they are to view, smeared over with paste of
brilliant magenta;
Paśupati is extremely jealous of that *aśoka* tree
In Your pleasure grove for desiring to be kicked by them.

The very opening words of this verse seem to underline the importance of "spoken words," as if there is some difference between spoken and written words, or any other form of representation, such as words that are heard from a radio broadcast. God's words are another possibility. The reason why spoken words are particularly important here must be because the highly nominalistic and schematic status of the contents of the verses from this point onward have to recognize two cancelable counterparts. The beauty of the twin feet of the Goddess is still the subject matter here, but beauty is meant to be treated here in great schematic abstraction. The beautiful form is meant to be abstracted out of other realistic implications, which might complicate our meditations about the absolute Beauty value of the Goddess. Spoken words are tangible, and not just concepts or names in a purely mathematical sense; they are more real. What they are meant to refer to here, so as to give them a visible content, is the colorful beauty of the twin feet of the Goddess. These two counterparts, the nominalistic and formal factors, are meant to be canceled out, so that the resultant value could attain, as is intended in these verses, to the Absolute (or overwhelming value) emerging from the equation of the visible with the audible. We can expect the *schematismos* to become thinner and thinner in this section as we proceed step by step toward the culmination of this work where everything is going to be canceled out,

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whether into the nothingness or somethingness or both, which the absolute Value in terms of Beauty is meant to represent anywhere in this work. Knowing such a plan in advance, it would be easier for us to follow some of the finer subtleties or combining nominalism and structuralism, so as to transcend even these finally. We could pass, thus, not only from realism to what is implied as the meaning lying behind some real pictures, but go one step deeper into the meaning of meanings, delving into the semiotic processes of language itself.

After asking the Goddess to place her twin feet on his own head in the previous verse, the author intends to evaluate this relation while standing on still thinner grounds. It is the magenta color on the soles of the feet that becomes more important than the feet themselves as the locus of beauty. The brilliant magenta describes it, while spoken words meet it from the opposite side, as it were, to enhance its meaning content. This is what might be expected to be happening on the positive or conceptual side of the total situation.

At the same time, there is a more ontological level where the same value called "the magenta glory" on the soles of the feet is the cause of some disturbance for Siva, who is here represented as jealous. Jealousy is a negative sentiment and cannot really exist as a virtue in such a high god as Siva, but even as a negative sentiment the possibility of jealousy is not to be completely ruled out. It is bad to be hungry but that doesn't mean hunger doesn't exist. Similarly, it is bad to be jealous, but it is seen to be necessarily operative in human life. Godliness cannot thrive in a vacuum, but must have a negative basis on which it can express itself, however faint that negativism might be. In the sense that "the exception proves the rule," the negative features of the Absolute have to enhance its meaning by demonstrating its capacity to transcend its own negativity. What is a virtue at the head end has to imply a vice at the tail end, if Absolutism is not to exclude anything from its scope. This follows from the dialectical rule known to Parmenides and Zeno from ancient times, that "the one and the many" had to belong together if they were to make any meaning at all.

Siva is here only jealous of a garden tree and not of any equally worthy person. In other poems, like Kāḷidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitra*, the same kind of ideogram is seen to be fully

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understood by Sanskrit poets. The *aśoka* tree has to be kicked by the decorated soles of a royal personality if its poor soul is to be thrilled sufficiently to stimulate its own kind of erotic mysticism, creating within it a festive marital sense of exaltation natural to its marriage season. In addition to producing new magenta-colored tender foliage from bottom to top, the stimulus of the kick would be sufficient to thrill the subhuman soul into a kind of exalted mystical state that is supposed to be very enjoyable to the plant. This kind of mixing of human life with the world of mere vegetation, by establishing the unity of life at all levels, underlines an Advaitic attitude which tends to treat life as one, and not as divisible into compartmentalized interests. The jealousy of Siva in such a context could accommodate a degree of negativity which could be treated, in principle, as already abolishing itself in the context of the totality of the mystical sentiment of life, from which the jealousy itself comes as a byproduct. Kāḷidāsa's poetry abounds in cancellation of this sort, in which double negation at the tail end and double assertion of a virtue at the head end cancel out into a unique form of absolute Beauty or Virtue. In the second half of this verse, we have to note that Siva is called Paśupati (the Lord of Beasts), which refers to his overlordship in the world of zoology. The *aśoka* tree belongs to the world of botany; even here there is a correct respect for naming counterparts by which cancellation could be according to accepted rules and conventions of mathematics. The Goddess here seems to be living in a garden not unlike the *pramadavana* (the pleasure grove of infatuation), which figures in almost every play of Kāḷidāsa. Understanding Sankara, there fore, naturally presupposes understanding Kāḷidāsa, his fore-runner. Siva has to be jealous of a poor and humble tree in distress, because he cannot find any other rival in the three worlds on whom he could fix his jealousy. This further enhances the verticality of the perspective in which this negative quality is to be canceled out against itself. Jealousy is a horizontal negative sentiment which deserves to be abolished, and is in effect abolished in this verse. No judge in a courtroom would take this charge of jealousy very seriously at all.

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mṛṣā kṛtvā gotra skhalanam atha vailakṣya namitam
lalāṭe bhartāram caraṇa kamale tāḍayati te
cirād antaś śalyam dahana kṛtam unmīlitavatā
tulākoṭi kvāṇaiḥ kilikilitam īśāna ripuṇā.

After having inadvertently defaulted in respect of Your family name,
While stooping in shame, as You kicked Your husband's forehead
With Your lotus feet, that enemy of Siva, wholely giving up his longstanding rancor caused by the heat (of Siva)
Celebrates his victory with clamor of many jingle bells.

In Verse 86, the lotus feet are meant to be canceled out against a mistake made by Siva in referring to the name of the clan of Pārvati's father. In short, name and form are meant to be canceled out to help us to attain the Absolute. There is no Tantric secret at all here, as some would try to find in these verses. It is not impossible, however, to see it from a Tantric perspective if we should so desire. The divinities Siva, Pārvati and Kāma enter into the composition of this verse, which might remind us of the Tantric tradition. The picture of Siva stooping in shame, also reminiscent of some structural feature belonging to the Tantric context, has to be seen side by side with the lotus feet, which have to reach the forehead to be able to kick it. This could happen only if the feet are placed in a correspondingly bent position. They could be imagined to be in a contiguity within a circle or better still within the figure of eight formation at the core of the total situation. There is a kind of second or third dimensional loop or circle to be understood here. As we have said in respect of Verse 7, solid geometry and conic sections of more than two or three dimensions could be pressed into the service of this structuralism. Pythagorean trigonometry and differential mathematical forms or calculations could be applied also.

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The jingle bells have also to be located by us in the total structure, without violating conventions proper to the language of *tantra*, *mantra* or *yantra*. Evidently they must be treated as the same as the jingle bells of Verse 7 on the waistbelt of the *puruṣikā*, represented there in the full dynamism of all her possible motions put together into one living form. Here the negative or horizontal feeling, which is not a virtue at all and thus not ornamental even to the God of Love, is the element of longstanding rancor which Kāma has been keeping repressed within himself against Siva, whom he considers to be a rival obstructing his own intentions and free functioning. Siva stands defeated in this verse, at least for a moment. How does this enhance the beauty of the Goddess to make it attain the Absolute? Here the same argument as in the previous verse should hold good. Every kick on the forehead of Siva by Pārvati makes the erotic sentiment circulate more freely. The God of Love thus feels that he is not fully useless. Siva is against him normally, because he represents the heated or lighted side of reality, with a corresponding cold and dark side to the same. The circulation of erotic values in the core of the Absolute, whether positive or negative, takes place because of a slight mistake in naming the clan to which Pārvati really belonged. This slight error has had the disastrous consequence of causing eroticism to begin to function, although indirectly, stimulating the sentiments that can bridge the gulf of cancellation of dark against bright instinctive disposrtions. The victory belongs directly to the beauty of the Goddess, in whose borrowed light or glory the God of Love is also jubilant. It is the occasionalism again that justifies such a temporary defeat and humiliation of Siva. The beauty of the total picture is not marred by this slight blemish, just as one can prove the opposite by the same token. This way of proving the opposite is a favorite method adopted by wives for agruing with their husbands. It is negative but not false. A knowledge of such a possibility might save many quarrels in everyday life.

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himānī hantavyam himagiri nivāsaika caturau
niśāyām nidrāṇam niśi caramabhāge ca viśadau
varam lakṣmī pātram śriyam atisṛjantau samayinām
sarojam tvad pādau janani jayataś citram iha kim?

Capable of being killed by snow, and fully at home on the snowpeak,
Sleeping at night, and in bloom both at dawn as well as after,
Making Lakṣmi's bowl overgenerous to Your Vedic worshipers,
The twin lotus of Your foot triumphs, oh Mother—what wonder herein!

In Verse 87 the twin feet are treated together, and not as one plus one. With this secret in mind, we get the intended meaning more easily than if the theory of ensembles involved here is not duly respected at the very start. In order to treat the twin feet as an ensemble consisting of two items of the same class it would be helpful for us to put a circle, or even the three circles of the *śrī cakra*, round them, placed at the *bindusthāna* (central locus of meditation).

There are three sets of lotuses in this Verse which have to be arranged in pairs to fulfill the requirements of the correct structuralism intended in these verses. A hierophantic lotus is likely to be killed by snow, but a golden lotus placed at a high hypostatic level would thrive even in a very cold temperature. These two lotuses have thus to be placed in a vertical axis at different levels. There are two other lotuses in the second line which are to be placed horizontally because of the alternation of day and night, and which are not as generalized and abstracted as the first pair of lotuses.

In the third and fourth lines the ensemble represented by the two feet compared to lotuses have no horizontal or vertical duality implied between them. They are compared to the bowl ofLakṣmi. though placed at a lower \evel, in a more ordinary

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workaday world, where hedonistic and relativistic interests are still natural and permissible. We have seen that Lakṣmi is the Goddess of Wealth, whom those who want to become rich in this life naturally treat as their chosen divinity. Sankara is evidently thinking here of the Tantric school of Samayins, who belong to the revised and more respectable Vedic context, as against the Kaulins who connive at certain disreputable practices, though perhaps in a manner more correctly fulfilling the requirements of Tantrism in other respects. There is, however, one respect in which the description here does not fit the Samayins. Overgenerousness is an absolutist virtue which cannot strictly apply to a relativistic and hedonistic context such as is actually proper to the Vedic school under reference. This distinction, between just granting prayers and granting more than what is prayed for, has been brought into its correct revised perspective by Sankara as early as Verse 4, where the feet of the Goddess alone were considered to be expert in yielding "more-than-asked-for boon." This is a touch of revaluation coming from Sankara, of which the Samayins could be taken to be ignorant.

We have to further note that the Sanskrit language has singular, dual and plural numbers, and not merely singular and plural as in most languages. Here the twin feet could be treated as a singular ensemble, or as being dualistic when each foot has got a distinguishable characteristic of its own. Both of these syntactical requirements are meant to be respected in this verse, as we can see by scrutinizing the antecedents of the words *pādau* (your twin feet) and *jayatah* (they both triumph) where the dual verb agrees with a dual noun. Strict syntactical requirements would demand a separate verb to agree with what should be treated in the singular. Amends for this kind of grammatical discrepancy seem to be made quickly by Sankara at the end of this verse, when it says "what wonder herein!" This is as good as saying that even if there is an impossibility hiding here, the absolutist status intended to be given to the two feet treated together, when understood in all its uniqueness as an ensemble with a unity of meaning in itself and for itself, should not be treated as anything unexpected. In other words, one should not wonder. There is still room for miracles in this world. The Absolute itself is a miracle, and one should not be surprised to find it so.

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The reference in the second line to two kinds of lotuses could be treated as referring to a sensitive lotus, like an ordinary lotus, and one that is not sensitive and does not change whether it is day or night. The sensitive lotus would correspond to the virtuality or subjectivity implied in a dream state. Ordinary flowers which have no such sensitivity to light are like the wakeful consciousness, lacking subjectivity altogether. This is a horizontal difference between the positive and negative aspects quantitatively understood, as between plus and minus numbers in the context of Cartesian correlates. They do not refer to the imaginary numbers of incommensurables, which have a deeper and more theoretical transfinite reference. Complex numbers belong together as understood here.

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padam te kīrtīnām prapadam apadam devi vipadām
katham nītam sadbhiḥ kaḍhina kamaḍhī karpara tulām
katham vā bāhubhyām upayamana kāle purabhidā
yad ādāya nyastam dṛşati dayamānena manasā.

Your foot is the supreme seat of good repute, oh Goddess!
How then did it come from danger to safety?
The wise treat it as of tortoise-shell-hardness; how was it then that Siva,
With his tender mind, could lift it at Your wedding to place it on the ritual stone?

In Verse 88 the wonder of the previous verse, by which miracles are to be expected as normal, is carried over into the domain of semantic polyvalence. Punning is not considered quite respectable in societies that conform to conventional standards, but Shakespeare indulges in it very frequently. Homer's *Odyssey* contains the story of how Ulysses, along with his fellow travelers, escaped from the cavern of the cyclops by giving his name as "no man." Great poets have such a license, which heightens the quality of their poetry instead of detracting from it. In this verse, Sankara freely indulges in Sanskrit words which seem to contain a mystery based on the interplay of sounds and meanings. In analytic psychology this tendency is looked upon as a low form of association reflecting psychotic states. It is elsewhere understood, however, that poets, madmen and lovers have the same kind of imagination. Viewed in this light, this verse continues the vague background of wonder proper to a devotee whose instincts are stronger than the workings of his intelligence. We have, therefore, not to look for any strict consistency of meaning here. Words and their meanings blend into a beautiful confection, which we are asked to enjoy.

In spite of this, there are vague traces of suggested meaning which we can extract, which, by abolishing paradox, heighten the sense of wonder with reference to the same beautiful pair of

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feet, which are now again to be put at the focal point of the *bindusthāna* for us to meditate upon. The first two lines, as before, contain a paradox which is of a conceptual, semantic and semiotic order. The second half of the verse refers to a more realistic paradox in which something rigidly solid is still capable of being treated as something supple. If the former is a metaphysical wonder, taking us beyond paradox, the latter is a physical wonder which heightens the wonder still more than by abolishing paradox altogether. The word *padam* can suggest both "the feet" and a state sufficiently stable with an idea contained in it, representing an absolute Value. *Padam* (a state) and *apadam* (a non-state) are used interchangeably and figuratively as referring to states of mind.

When thinking of the value represented by the two lotus feet of the Goddess the two opposite perspectives, belonging to two ambivalent attributes that could be applied to them, could be suggested together to the mind. Normally the feet of a Goddess could be treated as the seat of good reputation or *kīrti*. The Bhagavad Gita gives good reputation the first place among absolutist virtues which can embellish the beauty value of womanhood. As a leading virtue belonging to the bright side of life, good repute could be an attribute applicable to the feet of the Goddess, when viewed from a hypostatic perspective. When the same feet are viewed from the negative standpoint, they could have a dark/tragic connotation. These two ambivalent meanings, especially when an element of punning enters into the style, gives this poetry a special appeal. The three words *padam*, *prapadam* and *apadam* employed here are seen to be pressed into service as apt alliterations and as fully artful aids. Epigrammatic pithiness indicates a bright form of literary ability. Nominalism and structuralism are being employed here as if one wants to outdo the other. The first half of the verse suggests that at the lower limit there is a tragic import attached to the feet, which has now been sublimated and canceled out.

The second half refers to the ritualistic custom in which the husband must make the wife stand on a mashing stone for curry spices and look at one of the small stars, hardly visible to the eye, near the tail-end of the constallation Orion. This is the test of a long and happy married life. Whether the test failed or

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succeeded, it was adopted because of its ceremonial impressiveness, while relating human destiny with the movements of the stars.

When both of these suggestive representations of polyvalent meaning of meanings are treated together, there is a common characteristic of some value which could be called numinous, as opposed to phenomenal. It is the touch of the numinous that is to heighten the beauty value when the two instances are treated together, as referred to existence and subsistence, to produce a value.

The reference to the wise treating the leg as of tortoise-shell-hardness must either refer to some definite mythology somewhere in the eighteen epics in Sanskrit, or in the Tamil epics such as the *Siva purāṇa*. As mythologies generally are meant to suggest a deeper philosophical truth, we could guess here that the feet of the Goddess is where ontology attains to its maximum richness. In this sense it could be treated as solid matter, rather than anything flexible like a piece of wax. Solidity and liquidity have between them an element of a paradox, even in the world of solid existences. That must be the reason why such a reference becomes pertinent here.

Further, we note that the mind of Siva was in a melted state of kindness or compassion, while the feet of Pārvati were supposed by the wise to be concrete and rigid. The paradox results from a cross reference from matter to mind, implying a transfer or inter-changeability of epithets. This is another touch that is meant to heighten the paradox in the domain of semantic polyvalence as applied to the significance of the beauty of the feet of the Goddess.

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nakhair nākastrīṇām karakamala saṅkoca śaśibhis-
tarūṇām divyānām hasata iva te caṇḍi caraṇau
phalāni svasthebhyaḥ kisalaya karāgreṇa dadatām
daridrebhyo bhadrām śriyam anišam aḥnāya dadatau.

With fingernails of the lotus hands of celestial damsels that put to shame the moon,
Your twin feet seem to mock celestial trees,
Oh Tragic One, Caṇḍi, offering fruit to heaven dwellers,
With leaf-tender finger-like tips, and bringing secure riches to the poor instantly and incessantly.

A biological analogy is resorted to in Verse 89, rather than a semantic one. States of consciousness are involved in the wonder of Verse 87. The beauty of a tree can be recognized by the magenta-colored tender shoots which resemble lotus buds. The fingernails could represent the growing points of trees as they unfold the tips of their leaf buds, resembling outstretched hands, trying, as it were, to propitiate heaven by fit offerings from below. The moon is also a biological object in heaven, but it is stated here in the first line that the beauty of moonlight is nothing compared to the beauty of the tender offering of colorful sprouts marking the topmost limit of the structure of a tree. The trees in heaven must have slender stems, corresponding to their refined grade in the scale of hypostatic values. The feet of the Goddess, in such a superfine or superior context, could mock the stems of celestial trees by superior strength or stability, because the Absolute has an equal reference to heaven and earth.

In the second half of this verse, the aspect of the Goddess is seen in a slightly revised perspective. She is no longer a delicate celestial damsel, but is here called Caṇḍi (one with a terrible or tragic touch in her character). Caṇḍi (Kāḷi) is darker in color; but what she loses by way of delicacy or refinement she gains on the side of ontology.

These two polarized perspectives of the same absolute Goddess yield contrasting pictures which are meant to be canceled out against each other, and not to be treated as

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permitting any duality to persist between them. One is a horizontalized version of the other, which is the same viewed in a more transparent aspect, where concepts merge instead of being exclusive of each other. The mind participates equally with the two domains, where conflicts could be recognized so that they could be transcended. The feet of the latter Goddess are planted on the earth with full firmness or stability. Here she knows exactly what she wants, because ontology is richer in the content of certitude. The Vedanta of Sankara does not reject the importance of the *pratyakṣa*, that is, what is given to the senses. The experimental evidences are not to be explained away to lift the Absolute out of a workaday context, making it something holy or celestial with an "ivory tower" isolation of superiority. In this more ontologically biased version the tender leaves are not omitted, but the tragic touch of earthiness is a quality that not only tries to please the heavenly gods, but is sympathetic to the needs of the poorer man on earth. Sankara seems to vote for the latter version, because duality is seen to be more thoroughly abolished in it. This does not mean, however, that heaven-dwellers are to be left starving. The beauty of the Goddess suggested in the first two lines is good enough, but what is suggested in the second half is better. Neither of them is to be rejected, but they are to be correctly fitted into the total context of a non-dual absolute value called Beauty.

The qualifications "secure riches to the poor instantly and incessantly" makes happiness refer to a here-and-now world, rather than to a promised land which theologians might hold out for believers. Religion is full of promises which may or may not be realized. Politicians also fall under the same category, often whithout admitting it. The results are instantaneous when ontology is given its full place, and the benefits are more generally applicable. The satisfaction of the needy is more important than fantasies of the chosen few, who think of going to heaven first before having a life free from scarcity of basic needs here. The dialectics is between the "good of all" and the "general good." In the eyes of Advaita both are equally important. It is not eigher/or but "both together" that is to be kept as our aim, hope or idea.

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dadāne dīnebhyaḥ śriyam anišam āśānusadṛšīm
amandam saundarya prakara makarnadam vikirati
tavāsmin mandāra stabaka subhage yātu caraṇe
nimajjan majjīvaḥ karaṇa caraṇaḥ ṣaṭ caraṇatām.

Giving riches incessantly to the needy as required, and
distributing the store of honey
Of the celestial blossoms of beauty plentifully all around—
Into such a beauty of the cluster of celestial
blooms of Your feet
Let my life go, immersed with limbs and inner organs, into
six-footed beehood.

The 90th verse brings the two counterparts into closer integration so as to put the seal on them and close the subject, which still refers to the feet of the Goddess. We can see that a certain concession is made in this revised picture in favor of the teleological, rather than the ontological, but the unitive character of the values involved is intended to be maintained as a constant, common to the series referring to the twin feet that began with Verse 84. The center of interest can move lower or higher but the absolute Value content is still maintained as a constant. The needy people are seen to be satisfied first, but the celestial values are also distributed generously all round without considerations of high or low. The cluster of celestial blooms is inserted, permitting different levels, high or low, within the scope or amplitude of values in the third line, and the ontological aspect has passed from the beauty that is worshiped into the Self of the worshiper, who now compares himself to a six-footed insect, which is the bee that seeks the honey at the core of flower blossoms. The final term of sprituality is when the non-Self aspect, which is to be objectively enjoyed, and the Self aspect, which is the enjoyer, distinguished as the *bhogya* and the *bhokta* by Vedantic tradition, are finally canceled out to accomplish what is called *sāyujya* (union or immersion of the relative into the Absolute). The devotee is so wholehearted in his bipolar affiliation that he goes to the extent of saying that his very life should be abolished, so as to become merged in the absolute Value. The comparison to a bee is a favorite one. The individual

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personality of an aspirant could have three levels, each with two sides, representing the three *karaṇas* (inner instruments or organs), which are, psychologically, *buddhi* (intelligence), *citta* (relational mind) and *ahankāra* (ego sense). *Karaṇa* and *caraṇa* are used together here. *Karaṇa* represents the three instruments which we have just enumerated. *Caraṇa* refers to the feet, such as those of an insect, including the beetle, if it is necessary to think of an alternative. *Ṣaṭcaraṇata* means "insecthood."

The feet of an insect are outward organs of action; the three instruments are inner organs of understanding. Action and understanding are guided by the five senses and the mind, which are not mentioned here. This omission must be intentional, because it is the denominator status of the bee that can properly cancel out against the numerator factor of sense alternation, such as color, smell, etcetera, applicable to the five senses and the mind. By the indentity of interest in the content of the flower, the senses and the mind are, in effect, already canceled, especially when the bee is sitting inside the flower after establishing a wholehearted bipolarity of relationship between enjoyer and enjoyed. What remains still to be absorbed or lost into the context of absolute Value, represented by the beauty of the feet of the Goddess, are the inner organs and the three pairs of feet, making six (which is a specific characteristic of the zoological group called *Insecta*).

Insecthood is thus still to be canceled out against the positive qualities of the flower, which it seeks wholeheartedly to enjoy. The suggested idea is that the aspirant is praying for a wholehearted cancellation between subjective and objective aspects of beauty, so that even life itself could be abolished in favor of what the absolute Value, represented here by the feet, could represent. The limit of a wholehearted affiliation is thus marked by the favorite picture of a bee sucking honey within a flower, having values ranging from celestial to earthy ones without any duality between them. It is permitted here to think of a hierarchy of beautiful feet arranged tier on tier, touching both earthly and heavenly values in an ascending as well as a descencing order, neutralized at every point of the scale.

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padanyāsa krīḍā paricayam ivārabdhumanasaḥ
skhalantas te khelam bhavana kalahamsā na jahati
atas teṣām śikṣām subhaga maṇi mañjira raṇitac-
chalād ācakṣāṇam caraṇa kamalam cāru carite.

Your young domesticated cygnets, intent on learning from
You the sportive pose of steps,
Practice, though still with faults, oh One of Graceful
Gait, and do not give up;
Imitating the sound of gem-set anklets,
It would seem now that You are instructing them.

In Verse 91 the overall context of the scene represented is that of a teacher and many disciples. It is in and around the leg region of the Goddess that the interest still lingers, starting as it did even in Verse 82. Beauty is more easily described when it refers to the face than to the feet, but Vedanta insists on giving equal value to both. That is the reason why Sankara seems to take extra trouble to present a picture where the high function of teaching disciples is still the overall theme. Sarasvati can teach the three gods, who are her admirers or disciples. They are represented in previous verses as bending before her footstool or standing inclined and overcovering it.

Here it is not a question of brāhmins, saints, or divinities that are applicants for dicipleship. The disciples here consist of little swans, or cygnets, whose attachment to the Goddess is because they want to learn from her beautiful way in which she poses her steps when she walks, or even dances. Posing of steps correctly is a first lesson when learning to dance, next perhaps to the rolling of eyes and sharp movements of the neck. When legs are properly posed there is the sound of jingle bells fixed to the anklets which can have a firm and united resonance, which is sometimes imitated verbally by dance teachers, when footwork in dancing happens to be important. Instead of jingle

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bells, the anklets themselvs are here stated to be filled with gems. If the anklets are made with silver or gold there is a certain firm metallic beauty in the sound.

It is not the sound of the gem set anklets alone that comes into the picture. The Goddess while teaching, out of consideration even for subhuman disciples, takes the trouble of imitating the sound of gem-set jeweled anklets as the feet are gracefully planted, as they ought to be, in the correct dance poses. Sanskrit literature often describes the gait of a beautiful woman as one that resembles the way a swan walks. This might be a good enough comparison when the feminine features of the body of a woman are meant to be represented naturally and not artificially viewed. The cygnets are nearer to the ideal of the swan gait, but they themselves are not satisfied with such a maladroit way of walking. Nature has always to be corrected by nurture to complete the education, in the same way that decorative embellishments can enhance the beauty of an otherwise crude beauty found in nature. The prostitutes of Ujjain are seen to score in this respect in the writings of Kāḷidāsa.

When we consider that absotute Beauty involves cancellation of both numerator and denominator, it is not difficult to understand here why the young swans want to add to their natural gait something, for which they are willing to pay the price of learning through great insistence and troble, so that their beauty could approximate to what might be called absolute Beauty. It might be asked here why Kāḷidāsa did not give silk garments to increase the beauty of Śakunthaḷa, and actually said that anything, even a rag or a bark cloth, could only enhance the superior beauty which is already there in the person of Śakuntaḷa herself, descended as she was from the celestial goddess Menaka. The prerequisite is therefore not a decoration in itself, or naturalness in itself, but the cancellation of the one against other. The gem-set anklets represent an existent numerator value, but the living voice of the teacher, which imitates the sound of the gem-filled anklets as they are posed gracefully on the ground, adds further numerator accentuation to the beauty that belongs to the plus-side of the

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situation. When a woman is heavy in her gait and moves slowly along, like a swan when it walks on land, she is described as *vilāsini* (having accentuated attributes or characteristics of womanhood fully expressed through her beauty). Sanskrit poets revel in such descriptions of womanhood. Here Sankara purposely, it would seem, applies a corrective to this one-sided picture. He accomplishes this by bringing in a gem-filled anklet with a metallic sound, to supply a correct numerator to an otherwise negatively accentuated picture of feminine beauty. The full numerator side becomes added on to the total negative situation when the living voice of the Goddess is represented here as imitating the metallic sound, instead of treating it as inferior, as previously hinted at.

Teacher/pupil relationship is the background on which such a cancellation of counterparts takes place. It is when we remember that it is very difficult to represent beauty when it pertains to the existence side, that this representation of beauty gains a character as overwhelmingly absolutist in its value as the beauty in any other so-called superior context such as that of heavenly blossoms. Domesticated cygnets are treated with as much consideration as students of the Vedas in a gurukula. The overall dignity of the beauty is thus retained as a constant even here.

There is a reference to the faults that enhance the beauty, rather than spoiling it. Birds can be heard in the morning to be repeating some lessons as if to learn them by heart. They can also be heard to hesitate when they can't help making mistakes, on which they stop singing for a while. The lispings of children are beautiful in spite of the errors, and not because they are correct. Imitation of the sound of the anklets is two degrees removed from the actual, in that the sound itself reflects the firmness of the pose of the legs, of which the imitation by the voice of the Goddess is of a second degree.

The process of instruction, and not the actual instruction, is what is to be treated as the essence of the situation here portrayed. This explains the need for the last line, as a finishing touch added to the description.

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gatās te mañcatvam druhiṇa hari rudreśvara bhṛtaḥ
śiva svacchac chāyāghaṭita kapaṭa pracchada paṭaḥ
tvadīyānām bhāsām pratiphalana rāgāruṇatayā
śarīrī śṛṅgāro rasa iva dṛśām dogdhi kutukam.

Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Īśvara, Rudra and others are gone
to Your couchood;
The deceptive canopy derived from his crystal light
which Siva wears,
Turned to a magenta shade by Your radiance projected onto it
As the very embodiment of erotic bliss, charms the view.

In Verse 92 the reference to the beauty of the legs is finally abandoned in favor of the legs of a couch on which the Goddess is sitting. We had in Verse 8, almost symmetrically situated with the present one, a reference to the actual picture of a Goddess seated on a couch which represented a metamorphosis of the person of Siva himself. In the context of hermetic philosophy this is known as the principle of correspondence, shown by the tarot card of the man hanging head downward. There is a subtle inversion, what Bergson would call "a back to back relation," or a correlation between the world of concepts and the world of percepts. Bergson even goes to the extent of saying that "we happen to accidents" and not the other way about, as we might think. An epistemology and methodology proper to such a view which we have to learn to understand as a possible philosophical perspective, is quite in keeping with Vedanta and the structure of the Absolute known to it. We cannot enter into the discussion of such a view-point here.

Siva, as a crystal-clear value placed at the omega point in the vertical axis, can lend his own ontological reality to natural objects such as the couch, which is here referred to in the first line as being comprised of his sub-functionaries within the Absolute, who are divinities placed at a lower level. When

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reflected on the side of percepts, they could in principle lend support to the ontological stability or firmness of the couch on which the Goddess, occupying the neutral point between the two extremes, is to be located or seated. The Siva principle is not expended by the secondary functions that he sanctions from his own higher position. His crystal-clear pure principle, of a conceptual order, can take the deceptive form of a canopy which could have at first, before he descends too low toward the couch, a clearer complexion or color participating more closely with the numerator than with the central magenta of the mid-region occupied by the Goddess. Such a clear canopy, however, as it descends toward the center from above, could have a borrowed magenta color playing on it.

Thus the canopy would, by its revised and more ontological conditioning with reference to the central magenta glory that the Goddess always represents, appear to be magenta, while really being crystal clear in color. The real can be conditioned by the false, and vice versa. The resultant indeterminism or ambiguity belongs to *māyā*. Eroticism is proper to the negative side, but it looks as if the positive side is also conditioned by the same quality. This is another example of *anyonya addhyāsa* (mutual participation), of which we have had more delicate instances, as in the description of the lips and the teeth in Verse 62, and in other verses. Eroticism, as the last line makes clear, is meant here only to charm the view, and add to the beauty value of the situation represented here.

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arāḷā keśeṣu prakṛti saralā mandahasite
śirīṣābhā citte dṛṣad upala śobhā kucataṭe
bhṛśam tanvī maddhye pṛthur urasijāroha viṣaye
jagad trātum śambhor jayati karuṇā kācid aruṇā.

Curly in hair, with a smile of natural simplicity, a magenta-
flower-supple mind,
Bust firm like a kitchen mashing stone, extremely slender
at the waist,
With solid shoulders and hips—thus, Siva's world to save,
She reigns supreme: a certain Kindliness called magenta.

In Verse 93 we have the picture of a common girl whose beauty is a plain and straight forward kind with nothing glamorous about it. This does not, however, detract from the absolute quality that belongs to it, which we have to try to discern in and through the common earthy touches with which her beauty is here painted in straightforward simplicity. Great painters sometimes produce pictures of a simple girl holding an apple or a rose in her hand. Great masters can succeed in giving just those touches which will make such paintings have an eternal value to those who can genuinely appreciate the value of art. Good art requires people to appreciate it.

The bust is here seen to be compared to a kitchen utensil instead of any heavenly lotus. Her hips and shoulders are firm because she must be a kind of peasant girl used to hard work. The simplicity of her mind is transparently revealed by her smile. She is capable of being extremely sympathetic, having, as it is stated here, "a magenta-flower-supple mind." Her function, as stated in the third line, is no less than the most important one that we could ever think of: that is, of saving what Siva would otherwise destroy. Thus she represents in herself a concentrated negative value capable of supplying an adequate denominator to

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the positive forces of destruction that might put in danger the whole world at a given moment. The common touch in her looks is therefore not to be despised. She is not represented as wearing any jewels or decorations, but her matter-of-fact plainness is of sufficient beauty to her in itself, the value of which she never doubts for a moment.

The only embellishment is the color magenta, which uniformly overcovers and pervades her personality. Magenta being an absolute Color among all colors, (by addition or subtraction from which any other tint, shade or brilliance— whether of chromatic or achromatic colors—is derivable, as known to the modern color film technique), she needs no further coatings of paint or thinning of what already is there. Inner brilliance, fully saturating the color effect from inside, could be presupposed by us, because in the last line she is said to reign supreme as the very personification of Kindliness, expressed through her mere magenta presence, sufficient unto itself.

Kindliness as a quality can be thought of as having a capital letter, raising it fully to the status of an absolute value at least as dignified as what Śiva, from her own theoretical side, could represent in his person when looked upon as distinct from Devi. Separating the two principles, however, is not correct. One has rather to say that the beauty of the Goddess is the same as that of Śiva and vice versa. The slightly ontological bias of Vedantic methodology can, however, be permitted to tilt the delicate balance involved here, in the present series at least, in favor of the Goddess instead of the God. This is only a methodological necessity. Doctrinally, the same Advaita remains valid.

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kalaṅkaḥ kastūrī rajanikara bimbam jalamayam
kalābhiḥ karpūrair marataka karaṇḍam nibiḍitam
atas tvad bhogena pratidinam idam rikta kuharam
vidhir bhūyo bhūyo nibiḍayati nūnam tava kṛte.

The dark zone of the moon is musk, the orb of the moon
is watery,
The moon's phases are camphor bits filling a box of ebony,
Which, when emptied daily by Your joys,
Brahma fills up again and again for Your sake.

In Verse 94 we come to a very complex structural content, representing beauty which is placed within the context of darkness or night, here referred to as the black box of ebony. The box is suggestive of a real existent object. We see that cosmological, psychological and theological entities are meant to create this picture of the negative aspect of beauty, which is of the nature of existence rather than of essence. Musk and camphor are favorite examples of objects which can change into previous essences in spite of being existent objects. The duality between existence and essence has been the cause of much philosophical controversy from scholastic times to the present day. Indian philosophy tends to speak in terms of existence, as when the Bhagavad Gita refers to the sapidity of the waters as a *rasa*, or taste, and identifies it with the absolute personality of Kṛṣṇa himself who says, "I am the sapidity of the waters" (VII:8). The composite picture presented in this verse brings existence and essence into relief as items that are contained in a black box belonging to the Goddess, who is supposed to expend them in the form of the joys that she might have during the course of each day. The moon is the presiding orb during the night, and it is in the context of the night that enjoyments of a negative order become operative, thus tending to make the essences either disappear by permeation into the air, or by being changed into

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heat and light, as in the cases of musk and camphor respectively. Musk is a negative existent form of matter that spreads its perfume subtly throughout an enclosed room. The beauty of the night sky is compared to a jewel box by philosophers like Kant and poets like Shelley.

We have here to think of a living room of the Goddess, who is placed within a cosmological context of the alternating waxing and waning of moonlight. It is not the bright side of the moon with which we are directly concerned here, but rather with the negative or dark side of moonlight. As in Shakespeare's reference to the "watery moon," even from ancient times the affinities of the moon have been proverbially understood as belonging to the side of water rather than to the side of fire. The moon's phases have already been compared to camphor bits in Verse 65. These have to be replaced after a fortnight, but if we think of what is expended instead of what is gained, the light that is lost each day can be said to need replacement after each night's enjoyment of erotic pleasures on the part of the Goddess. Thus, in the last line it is stated that Brahmā, the Creator, whose function is connected with eternal regeneration, fills the dark ebony box with what has been lost each day. There is a compensatory metabolism in terms of existences and essences in the combined context of cosmology, psychology, and theology evident here. The overall perspective, however, still remains negative, as it is the contents of the black ebony box that occupy the focus of interest in this verse. Beauty seen from the dark side, rather than from the bright side, as subjected to daily increase or decrease is the overall theme. We know that in an ordinary physical metabolism food is transformed into caloric units of energy to be spent by the mechanistic activities of each day. This verse attains to the same kind of diurnally alternating metabolism, connected , not with any physiological system, but to an aspect of personal life where subtler enjoyments are involved. Instead of getting exhausted by such enjoyments, it is to be seen that every time enjoyment expends the existent essences involved, they are to be replenished by the God of Creation himself. Thus, life goes on eternally in the form of a perpetual alternating motion, as between the getting and spending of existential essences. In

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spite of this alternating process, what emerges out of the total situation is a form of dark splendid beauty more proper to a Kāli than to a Sarasvati. Even in this late verse it is ontology that has primacy over teleology. This viewpoint is underlined by the analogy of the ebony box. Śyāmala, "the Dark One," is an epithet that is applied to this kind of absolute Goddess, seen from the negative perspective.

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purārāter antaḥpuram asi tatas tvac caraṇayoḥ
saparyā maryādā taraḷa karaṇānām asulabhā
tathā hyete nītāḥ śatamakha mukhās siddhim atulām
tava dvāropānta sthitibhir aṇimādyābhir amarāh.

As You are the consort of Siva, it is difficult indeed for
Unsettled minds to attain to the equivalent of the way of
Your worship;
Whatever limitless gains the divinities, such as Indra and
others might have had,
They got those psychic powers, such as *aṇima*, from just
outside Your door.

In Verse 95 Sankara intends to sound a warning applicable to what he has been so far trying to hold up to view as a superior example of absolute Beauty. He says now that there could be a majority of people for whom this way of looking at beauty, from a feminine and negative standpoint, might be prejudicial to their spiritual progress. Most human beings are interested in gaining some kind of advantage for themselves while they continue to live here on earth. Transcendental values can interest only rare individuals whose minds have been first established in the context of the true contemplation of the Absolute, in which salvation, and not any other hedonistic or relativistic advantage, is to be gained. This is because most people are likely to forget that the Goddess is to be treated as a correct counterpart of Siva, who is well-known to be the greatest of austere personages. He is a model ascetic, so the Goddess, as his consort, cannot be like any other woman. In order to be in love with an ascetic of the superior quality of Siva, there must be the same complementary quality present in the Goddess as a counterpart of such asceticism. This would mean that the worshiper of such a Goddess could not think in terms of gaining any advantage belonging to the three worlds of earth, heaven or the interspace.

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Vedanta discountenances *siddhis* (phychic powers), such us *aṇima* (the power to become very tiny) and so on, which we have reviewed under Verses 30 and 31. Even Patanjali, though only belonging to the context of Sāmkhya philosophy, in his *Yoga Sūtras* (III:37) clearly states that interest in psychic powers (*siddhis*) has a counter-effect against the progressive establishment of *samādhi* (absorption). The Bhagavad Gita also disdains *siddhis* as being *paripanthinau* (obstructions to the right path).

In the second half of this present verse these *siddhis* are brought into relation with the absolute Goddess. Does the Goddess grant *siddhis* to votaries that might propitiate her, or is she altogether outside such an inferior context? To such a pointed question, this verse answers that such *siddhis* are not primarily within the proper scope of the kind of benefit to be prayed for in respect of the absolute Goddess, who, as wife of Siva, is not interested in granting *siddhis* that would only be advantageous in a hedonistic setup. She would only treat the granting of such psychic powers as incidental and not as her main function. Even Vedic gods, like Indra and others, like to have some advantages in the form of *siddhis*, with which they could dominate those who do not have such powers. Thus the Goddess here neither grants *siddhis* nor refuses to grant them. She leaves them outside the door of her temple for those who badly need them. The gods may thus serve themselves freely with them if they should so insist, not knowing that *siddhis* are really detrimental to the fullest spiritual progress in the correct absolutist context of Vedanta as distinct from the Vedas. The Vedic gods themselves have been beneficiaries in this matter and have been helping themselves to the available *siddhis* which they could pick up from what was discarded by the Goddess outside her temple door.

Most persons, who are referred to as being of unsettled minds and incapable of the proper way of worship of the absolute Goddess, could belong to the three kinds of Devi worshipers, which are: the Kaulins, the Uttara Kaulins, and the Samayins. All of these, like the hedonistic gods of the Vedas themselves, are motivated not by the desire for full

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emancipation, from a Goddess who is the true wife of Siva, but for relativistic benefits from various surrogate divinities who are substitutes for the same Goddess. The wifehood of Siva confers that absolute status, without which true salvation will not be guaranteed to supplicants. The whole of this picture in Verse 95 refers to the context of a temple worshiper whose interest in the Absolute has not yet attained the "white heat" of absolutism, which alone can insure that full emancipation that Siva and Sakti united together can confer by the combination of their mutually cancelable functions.

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kaḷatram vaidhātram kati kati bhajante na kavayaḥ
śriyo devyāḥ ko vā na bhavati patiḥ kairapi dhanaiḥ
mahādevam hitvā tava sati satīnāmacarame
kucābhyām āsaṅgaḥ kuravaka taror apy asulabhaḥ.

The wife of Brahmā, how many, how many poets do not woo?
Or, by merely having some wealth, who is it that cannot
claim to be husband to Lakṣmi?
Oh Constant Wife—of the term "constancy" the ultimate
meaning—outside of Siva,
It is hard even for an ordinary garden tree to have contact
with Your breasts.

In Verse 96 Sarasvati, Lakṣmi, and Parvati are discussed together to underline that the former two, who belong to the context of relativism and hedonism,cannot be of the same order as Parvati in her relation with Siva. Vedic learning and wealth are still mundane considerations, tending to have a horizontal reference. Only in the case of Parvati and Siva is the relation of a pure and disinterested vertical order. Even though their relationship is fully verticalized, fulfilling the requirements of constancy between husband and wife as understood in the human context, the last line wishes to underline the unique superiority of Parvati's constancy, to the exclusion not only of rivals to Siva, but even of something extraneous to the wholehearted self-sufficiency of their intimate union, in which they are looked upon as being in each other's arms. One could suggest that when sitting in her garden, Parvati might have some kind of innocent pleasure in embracing her favorite garden tree. However, even this kind of innocent pleasure does not come to her mind, because the bipolarity involved in her relation with Siva is so intense that it cannot tolerate any extraneous factor which does not strictly belong to the same level of bipolarity. The union of Siva and Parvati has to exclude, in order to be fully

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absolute, all duality—as between two classes which are different, two classes which belong to the same side, or between two levels within the same class but of different levels—without violation of parity or identity vertically or horizontally. The reference to the tree here is to underline the wholehearted nature of the absolute union, with perfect parity between them, of Siva and Parvati.

The Absolute is without difference: as between two classes, as between the same class and as between itself and another aspect of itself *(sajātiya-vijātiya-svagata-bheda-sūnyata)*. The reference in the last line to a tree is to underline the last-mentioned requirement, that is, for any value to be treated as absolute. Parvati is a constant wife not only in the human sense but in a sense more ultimate and comprehensive, by which the constancy is totally self-sufficient. It is a constancy for itself, by itself through itself, in itself. Thus, as specifically indicated here, the ultimate meaning of constancy is recognized and complied with by Parvati in this verse.

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girām āhur devīm druhiṇa gṛhinīm āgama vido
hareḥ patnīm padmām harasahacarīm adritanayām
turīyā kāpi tvam duradhigama nissīma mahimā
mahāmāyā viśvam bhramayasi parabraḥma mahiṣī.

As Goddess of the Word, Veda-knowers speak of You as
Brahmā's wife,
Laksmi, as Viṣṇu's wedded one and the Mountain Daughter
as Siva's consort,
Certain others refer to You as the unattainable and boundless
"fourth state,"
While You remain as the Great Māyā, making the universe
go round as Queen of the Ultimate Absolute.

Sarasvati, Lakṣmi and Pārvati again figure in Verse 97, as the consorts of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Siva. This is the conventional way of treating the three Goddesses. There are philosophically minded people also referred to who do not resort to mythological language, but understand the Goddess as representing the *turīya*, or "fourth state" of consciousness, as clearly distinguished in the Mandukya Upanishad. Sankara is not in favor of any of these four possible alternatives, although he mentions them here in a preliminary fashion as representing the opinions of others. He prefers to call the Goddess a principle of Indeterminism in the most comprehensive and overall sense, as understood in the context of *brahmavidya* (the Science of the Absolute), to which the notion of *māyā* is a normal corollary.

We could easily see why the mythological, or theological, view of the Goddess here does not please Sankara. However, as Sankara is a philosopher attached to the Upanishadic view contained in the Mandukya Upanishad, one would expect the above reference to *turīya* to be compatible with his philosophy, and thus deserve his approval. Even this is not so, as Sankara

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himself states clearly in the last line. The Goddess is not an idealized transcendental picture presented in a too abstract and generalized form, as the notion of *turīya*, though such a picture would not come into conflict with the true nature of the Absolute in a more positive sense. In the context of the present work, where it is the negative perspective of the same *brahman* that can reveal the significant content of Beauty, in relation to which (as a central norm of reference at least) these verses have been composed, consistency would require that we view the status of the Goddess here in a perspective that is more ontologically than teleologically biased.

The "fourth state" would apply more aptly to Siva whose status, being conceptual, tends to be less real. The content of the Absolute would evaporate into nothingness if mathematical conceptualism were allowed to have primacy over the perceptualistic outlook, which is here retained in the name of a residue of the Beauty value in the Absolute. If even this slight prejudice in favor of the conditioned *brahman* should be abolished, the poetic function, which is at the basis of these verses, would be stifled and made altogether ineffective. Bergson also prefers to treat the world as a flux, rather than as a mathematical absolute, which is just a conceptual cliche empty of any real content according to him.

On closer analysis, the difference between the two absolutes, called higher or lower *brahman*, is only one of methodological or epistemological convention. When we mark the ends of electric wires with green or red color for the guidance of the electrician this does not mean that there are two electricities. In the colloquy of the three gods in the Kena Upanishad we read that Beauty as a value, in the form of Uma, the daughter of the Himalayas, is made to occupy the same space that had belonged a moment before to the higher Absolute (*parabrahman*). *Māyā* and *brahman* are thus interchangeable limbs of the same equation.

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kadā kāle mātaḥ kathaya kalitālaktaka rasam
pibeyam vidyārthī tava caraṇa nirṇejana jalam
prakṛtyā mūkānām api ca kavitāḥ kāraṇatayā
kadā dhatte vāṇī mukha kamala tāmbūla rasatām.

When, oh Mother, tell me, shall this Your
wisdom-seeker drink
Of the ablution water of Your magenta sap-smeared feet,
Causing even one dumb-born to be a poet?
When shall I enjoy within the flavor of the betel juice in
the lotus mouth of the Word-Goddess?

The black box referred to in Verse 94 was meant to be a summing up of the factors that have been used in something that resembles a game of chess, where various grades of chessmen have been put in the game to play their specific parts. The blackness of the ebony box marked the dark or negative perspective in which we were allowed to have a peep at the absolute Beauty of the Goddess. The celestial bodies belonging to the world of Brahmā, as the Creator, were treated as if placed in a jewelled casket, with the dark side more relevant to the context than the bright side of the chessboard. Now the nagative perspective has been left behind and we have further crossed over an intervening three verses in which the game pieces, representing divinities, are again reshuffled and rearranged in different ways so as to reveal the overall togetherness of interrelatedness between them. All psychic perfections have been placed outside the door of the temple of the Goddess in Verse 95. The union of Siva and Parvati has been made most self-sufficient in Verse 97. The remaining three verses of this work are meant to help the reader now gather up the loss threads from the anterior parts of this work which has unravelled itself in all its grandeur of overwhelming Beauty.

The dialogue in this verse between the Goddess and the supplicant primarily belongs to the context of Word-wisdom

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that she represents. To be a poet, instead of being dumb, as naturally every one is at birth, is the eivdent aspiration that motivates him. This is not essentially an aspiration of a religious order, where holiness and the sacred merits from obligatory works enter into the picture. The reference in the first person to such an aspirant, who is here addressing the Mother, cannot be to anyone other than Sankara himself. Even from the beginning he has taken care to disengage himself from the merely religious and hidebound context of merit, holiness and works. He maintains this detached attitude right through to the very end, where he is seen to wash his hands finally of all involvement, even disclaiming any direct responsibility for composing these verses. As if by way of preparing the ground for such a culminating attitude of detachment or neutrality, he is seen in the present verse to think in terms of becoming a good poet only.

It is as the Goddess of the Word, not merely, as understood conventionally when we speak of the Vedic Sarasvati, but with a whole series of inner beauty factors added to her total stock in trade; as it were, that we have here to think of Devi. Her function does not pertain only to the numerator side of the poetic genius, which might merely consist of clever manipulation of words and phrases. The poetic genius here covers the whole range of inner and outer endowments that could enrich the consciousness of a man, from being born without words at all, to the positive culmination of the role of a poet at its final limits, taking the genius beyond the zero-point, to the heights of the perfected Word, located at the omega-point. Poetic genius is an inner endowment and an (outer) accomplishment, referring to the Self and the non-Self respectively, when understood in terms of an inner reference linking both of them by a parameter that passes from the head to the feet of the two-sided personality of Devi, which we have always to keep in mind.

We have further to notice that it is only under the sole of the feet that evidence of this lengthy parameter reference could be seen by the eye, because poetic genius connot be seen from the outside looks of the poet. We have agreed with the author

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that the beauty of these feet could be placed at the highest point in a scale of values or could be brought down to touch the limits of the black ebony box, in which items of essential or existential beauty are enclosed. At whatever level the beauty of the twin feet might be placed, the magenta paste is the link and the indicator of the absotute value of Beauty that traverses the whole positive or negative gamut of possible aesthetic values, on whose basis poetic genius must live, move and have its being.

When ablution further purifies the beauty of the magenta sap smeared feet, the water would become the same color. Why does the supplicant want to drink this impotable water containing paste or incidental dirt? Further, he also intends to enjoy the flavor of the betel juice in the mouth of the Goddess. It is repugnant to think that he wishes to swallow the spit of the Goddess, as some commentaries suggest. Moreover, there is the difficulty of mixed metaphors in different verses. In Verse 84 it was water that was given importance, in Verse 75 it was the ocean of milk and in Verse 65 it was the betel juice in the mouth. Now all these figures of speech seem to have been gathered up and treated altogether. Sankara, as a philosopher of Advaita, is able to substitute himself for the absolute Goddess of Beauty, to the extent of being identical with her, by the complete affiliation to what she represents. Even the subject and object duality can be canceled out, as has been suggested in previous verses, such as Verse 30, where doomsday fire itself performs the light-waving rite. The non-Self and the Self as counterparts, whether as two individuals or fused into one, are to be treated as mathematically interchangeable terms, as in the limbs of an equation or in the cancellation of numerator against denominator.

Although betel chewing and its resultant magenta colored saliva goes inside the Goddess, because of its containing bits of soft camphor, the essential flavor could spread upward as well as downward into regions of memory or imagination within the body of the Goddess. The act of swallowing a liquid, not excluding one's own saliva, is an activity taking place, as it were, at the very core of our functional consciousness. The child sucks milk even in sleep, and a thirsty man can dream of drinking cool

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clear water even when the water is not there. Clear water can be colored magenta to make it participate with the beauty element of the betel juice of the mouth. The lotus plant can have a magenta color added to its beauty coming either from the earth or from the tender sunlight playing upon it. We have to keep all these possibilities in our mind, especially as they have been justified already at different stages of the development of this composition. Magenta is the element of beauty which could mix with water or milk to inspire the genius of a dumb or inarticulate poet as his career develops from birth to death. From such a wholesale and global perspective we can see the relevancy and aptness of this concluding prayer, where Sankara inserts himself directly in the first person, before he rounds up in the next two verses the whole subject by way of a final conclusion.

Sankara is a wisdom seeker still, because wisdom has never ending possibilities. One could never say that he has attained to a stage where he does not wish to learn any more. The analogy in Verse 90 of the six footed bee lost in lotus blooms seems to suggest that one is always involved in a process of absorption, at least till life itself is gone. Even then the six legs cannot be absorbed into the honey of the lotus. They have to drop out of the flower. Even the wisest man is in a process of absorption, and not in any finalized form of absorption. All are thus pilgrims in the path of the Absolute, some possibly superior to others, but none are to be considered statically superior, once and for all. Spirituality is an aspiration in the world of intentions, and is not to be treated as something to be accomplished in fact. This justifies the anticipation contained in the question "when shall I?" underlined twice in this verse. Magenta pervades and permeates through all the levels of the various *cakras*, whether of the first part or the second part of this work. The submissiveness and humility of Sankara here adds a touching dimension to the whole situation and sets off the whole work as something which can ennoble any other intelligent man like him.

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sarasvatyā lakṣmyā vidhi hari sapatno viharate
rateḥ pātivratyam śithilayati ramyeṇa vapuṣā
ciram jīvanneva kṣapita paśupāśa vyatikaraḥ
parānandābhikhyam rasayati rasam tvad bhajanavān.

Sporting with Sarasvati and with Lakṣmi, as co-consorts
with Brahmā and with Viṣṇu,
While disrupting with his charming body the constancy of
Rati to her lord,
With banished animality and bondage, living long—
Your supplicant enjoys the taste of what is known as
ultimate Bliss.

The ultimate Bliss referred to at the end of this verse is nothing other than what is known by other various names, such as salvation, emancipation, freedom, self-realization, *nirvāṇa*, *samādhi* and so on. Extreme ultimate felicity resides within the space of this verse. The main chessmen of this game are brought into a close-knit interplay. That it is a game that is implied here is revealed by the very first word, "sporting," for which the Sanskrit is *vihāra* (pleasing or recreative activity). Here the goddesses are seen with the husbands that properly belong to each. They are not after the husbands of others, so they are within the limits of good behavior. Everything is in perfect order and no rule of convention seems to be violated here, except in the second line where it is implied that somebody is spoiling the game that is natural between Kāma and his wife Rati. There is a whole passage called *Rati-vilāpa* (the wailing of Rati) in the *Kumārasambhava* of Kalidasa, which could be read here to clarify the implications of "disrupting the constancy of Rati to her lord." However undignified Rati might appear to be as the wife of a mere demiurge like Kāma, who can only attain to an absolutist status when everything else is favorable for him on rare occasions, justice would require that nobody should disrupt her right

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for conjugal enjoyment with her husband. Kalidasa makes provisions in the passage describing the wailing of Rati for poetic justice in this matter. Vasanta (the Flowery Season), a friend of the husband Kâma, to whom this wailing is addressed, responds consolingly, and some kind of justification is made by way of mending the injustice under reference here. Sankara does not go into such details because he is not writing lengthy poems of the kind that Kalidasa undertook. The last line suggests that there is some beneficiary of the wisdom taught in this work. The previous verse has already hinted at who this person could be. It is not important who that person is in actuality. This verse just wants to say that there is a beneficiary and that the benefits could apply to anybody, including the reader, who could hope for a long life, without being subjected to animal instincts which could spell suffering and bondage. Such a man, by the peace of mind and harmony that he enjoys, and the normalcy of even his physiological metabolism, could come to have a beautiful body. Yogis are seen to have such bodies, always with clear complexions and voices. When he becomes charming in such a sense the prolongation of his life will follow as a natural consequence. Life's chief fulfiliments, which are referred to as four in Sanskrit, namely, *dharma* (action according to necessary laws of nature), *artha* (wealth or benefits, such as endowments), *kāma* (right aspirations or desires) and *moksha* (salvation or ultimate happiness), are seen thus to be included in the scope of this verse by way of rounding off the contents before the grand conclusion that is to follow. We can easily see that it is not intended as a mere work on Tantra which, although it does not exclude salvation, gives lesser perfections a greater importance than this work does.

In the reference to co-consorts, "consort" is here meant to be treated as a partner independently of the sex. It could apply to a man or woman reader, or to a philosopher like Sankara. Abstraction and generalization, even in respect of the author or the beneficiary of this work, has been pushed to its ultimate possible limits here. Such abstraction and generalization can attain the Absolute irrespective of the reader, or the author or even the Goddess of this work. Sankara is thus able to treat the gods of the Hindu pantheon with a great deal of freedom.

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pradipa jvālābhir divasa kara nīrājana vidhiḥ
sudhā sūtes candropala jalalavair arghya racanā
svakīyair ambhobhis salila nidhisauhitya karaṇam
tvadīyābhir vāgbhis tava janani vācām stutir iyam.

To carry out the ritual propitiation of the sun by waving of lighted flames,
To offer oblations to the moon, the source of nectar, by particles of moonstone water,
To appease the deep with offerings of water of its own—
Such, oh Mother, is this wordy praise with words Your own.

The sun, the moon and the sea are seen to figure here prominently in the final verse. We are born into a world presided over by these three items. When treated comprehensively, equating oneself correctly with his own natural human environment is all that a man can be expected to do even if he should be wise or clever. When correctly equated with a one to one correspondence, in a spiritually or contemplatively revised orientation, these items cancel out against their counterparts. Even if the light of one candle flame cannot cancel out the bright sunlight, an infinite number of them could be thought of as establishing a correct cancelation of counterparts. "One and the many" could thus belong together to a supreme or absolute Value. Nothing would then remain to be said, or all would have been said when this much had been said. Thus we arrive at the grand terminating culmination of this work.

Watery oblations apply to the moon, while light flames apply to the sun, and the water of the ocean is returned by rains and rivers. Thus the overall situation remains as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end, forever.

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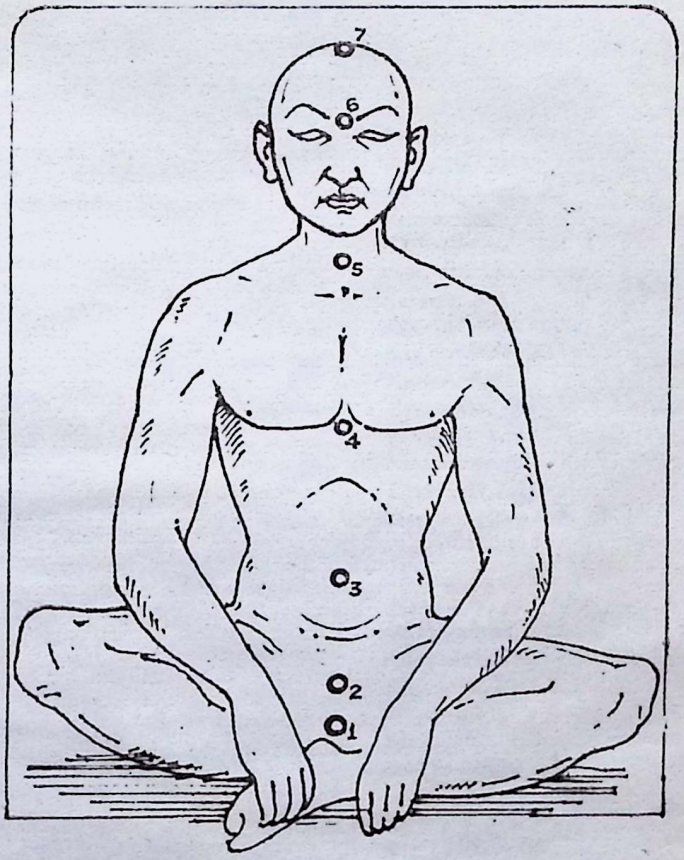

1. MŪLĀDHĀRA CAKRA
2. SVĀDHIṢṬHĀNA CAKRA
3. MAṆIPŪRA CAKRA
4. ANĀHATA CAKRA
5. VIŚUDDHI CAKRA
6. ĀJÑĀ CAKRA
7. SAHASRĀRA PADMA

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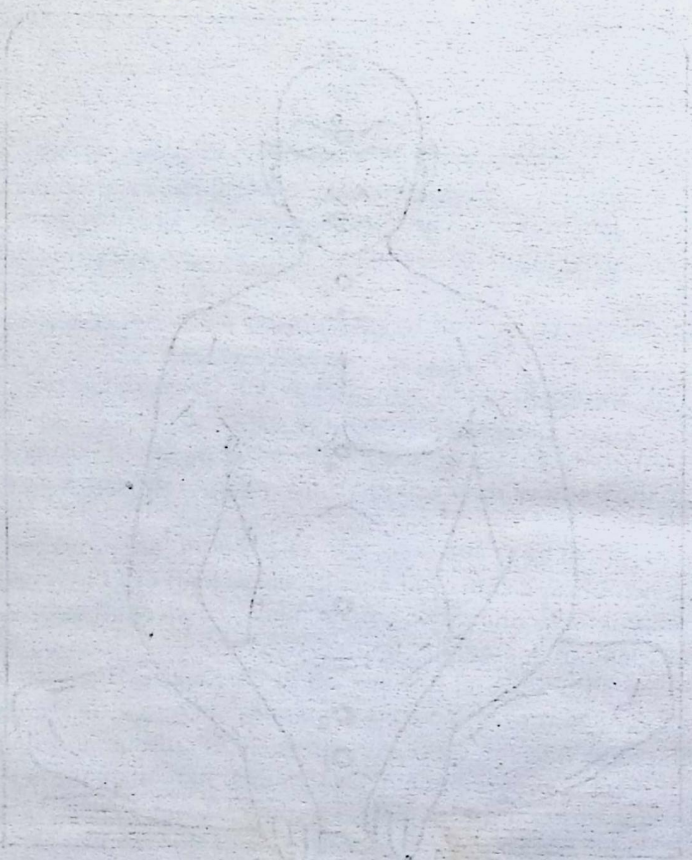

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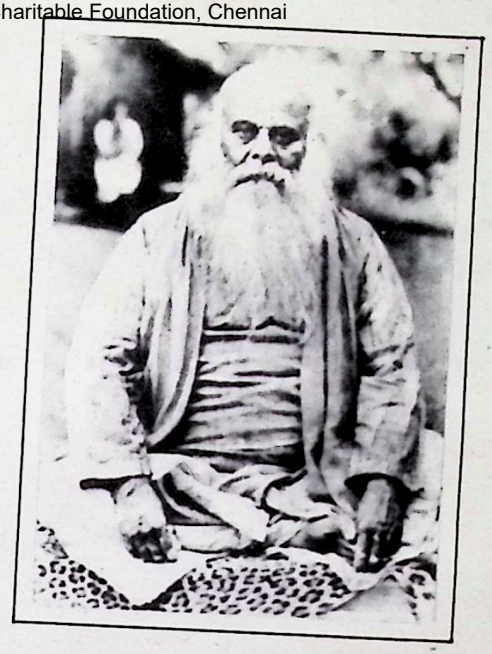

NATARAJA GURU was born in Bangalore in 1895. After post-graduation from the Madras University he became a close disciple of Narayana Guru (1854–1928). As directed by his Guru he spent five years abroad, teaching for some time at an international school in Switzerland, and taking his Doctorate of Letters of the Sorbonne at Paris. He founded several centers in India and abroad known as Narayana Gurukulas for the preservation of a type of life based on a global attitude derived from the Advaita philosophy, in which a rapport between Guru and disciples has a chief role. On his return from the second visit to Europe and America in 1951, he was publicly acknowledged as a Guru and the successor to Narayana Guru, uniquely qualified to present his teaching and attitude. He wrote several books, including original works and commentaries. He attained Mahasamadhi in 1973 at Varkala in the State of Kerala in India.

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SAUNDARYA LAHARI

The *Saundarya Laharī* is a work that has puzzled pandits and professors alike through the centuries. The authorship of Sankara has also been questioned. How could Sankara, an avowed Advaita philosopher, be credited with the authorship of this text which evidently is of the form belonging to the context of *Tantra Śāstra?* Conventional commentaries have not thrown any light on a number of puzzles like this.

The present commentator claims that there is a pictorial language hidden at the heart of this highly poetical composition, just like in most of the scriptures. Unravelling the structural secret of this language, which he calls 'proto-language', exposes the Advaitic vision of Sankara. The beauty of the Goddess is only a visual aspect of the Ultimate Value *(paramānanda)* aimed at by Advaitins.

The life-mission of the commentator had been bringing out this structural language which is a master key to open the secrets of the *lingua mystica* of the scriptures.

Narayana Gurukula,
Varkala, Kerala